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A HISTORY OF PRO-REC: THE BRITISH COLUMBIA PROVINCIAL
RECREATION PROGRAMME - 1934 TO 1953

by



PHYLLIS BARBARA SCHRODT

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1979



THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and
recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for
acceptance, a thesis entitled "A HISTORY OF PRO-REC: THE
BRITISH COLUMBIA PROVINCIAL RECREATION PROGRAMME - 1934 TO 1953"
submitted by Phyllis Barbara Schrodt
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to write a comprehensive history of the provincial recreation programme (Pro-Rec) that operated in British Columbia from 1934 to 1953, and to evaluate its significance, its influence on other recreation schemes in Canada, and the reasons for its termination. Sources for the study included: personal interviews and collections, archival records, government documents, newspapers, and published materials.

The study was organized into three main parts. The first was a description of the background conditions existing at the time of Pro-Rec's inception. The second part was a detailed examination of the programme during three distinct time periods: the Depression, World War II, and the Post-War Period. The final section was an interpretation of selected issues, including: the achievements and drawbacks of Pro-Rec; unique features of the programme; the influence of Pro-Rec leaders; political connections; and relationships with other organizations and institutions.

It was found that, while Pro-Rec offered an important service to the community during its early years, failures to modify programmes and administrative structures resulted in the inability to provide the kind of programme needed after World War II. One of the most important contributions made by Pro-Rec was as a model for recreation schemes in other provinces and at the federal level.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1934, the Province of British Columbia introduced a unique scheme of public recreation, aimed at raising the general level of health and morale by providing opportunities for participation in a programme of physical fitness and sports. At first referred to as "Provincial Recreation", the plan soon became known as "Pro-Rec", and it is this name by which it was most commonly identified.

The scheme was administered by a special branch of the Department of Education, under the directorship of Ian Eisenhardt, and was initially established to counteract the demoralizing influence of the Depression on unemployed young men. It was soon expanded to include women and employed men, and the response was overwhelmingly positive. Then, in 1953, in what appeared to be an abrupt reversal of government policy, Pro-Rec was discontinued, and replaced by a new administrative unit, operating under a different set of policies. Suddenly, the programme of free physical recreation centres, which had for so long been a significant part of public recreation in British Columbia, ceased to exist.

This study will examine the Pro-Rec programme in detail, tracing its growth and development, its influence on other phases of physical activity, and the causes of its discontinuance, in an attempt to add one more piece to the jig-saw puzzle that is the history of sport and recreation in Canada.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The writing of sport history in Canada appeared to have developed independently of the work of general histories, and even of social histories. As Wise noted, in his address to the North American Society for Sport History, "Canadian social historians have virtually ignored the history of sport and games".¹ Even in the few histories of the Depression in Canada, where social conditions of the period occupied a prominent place, no mention of the Depression-based Pro-Rec programme was found. Horn, in *The Dirty Thirties: Canadians in the Great Depression*, described the urban problems of the '30's, and stated that: "public provision for the recreation of the poor was largely limited to parks."² Gray's *The Winter Years* described unorganized recreation and sports, but not public recreation programmes.³ Such was also the case with *Ten Lost Years*, a collection of Depression reminiscences by Broadfoot.⁴ In *Canada's Unemployment Problem*, a contemporary account of Depression problems written in 1939, indirect reference was made to Pro-Rec in the section on "Unemployed Youth", wherein the author spoke of unique physical education, recreation, and group activities provided in British Columbia on a province-wide basis by the Department of

¹Sid Wise, "Sport and Class in Central Canada in the Nineteenth Century", *Proceedings and Newsletter*, North American Society for Sport History, 1974, p. 1.

²Michiel Horn, *The Dirty Thirties: Canadians in the Great Depression* (Toronto: The Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1972), p. 179. .

³James Gray, *The Winter Years* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1966).

⁴Barry Broadfoot, *Ten Lost Years: 1929-1939* (Don Mills, Ontario: Paperjacks, 1975).

Education.¹ Finally, Braithwaite, in *The Hungry Thirties*, gave little attention to sports and none to public recreation.²

A contemporary report on the problems of young people, published by the Canadian Youth Commission in 1946, contained a description of Dominion-Provincial activities, and included a section on Pro-Rec, entitled "The Plan in British Columbia". Activities at the centres were listed, and reference was made to the annual summer school for Pro-Rec instructors, and to the limited recreation philosophy underlying the programme.³

An examination of the Canadian sport and recreation literature revealed a number of superficial accounts of Pro-Rec, and these appeared to be based largely upon one source, the yearly reports of the Recreational and Physical Education Branch, published by the British Columbia Department of Education.⁴ These reports contained a wealth of statistical facts, as well as descriptions of the general programme, special events, and important developments. The reports were available for each of the years in which Pro-Rec operated, and provided an important source of information.

The best treatment of Pro-Rec in a published work was that presented by McFarland in her comprehensive study, *The Development of*

¹Lothar Richter, ed., *Canada's Unemployment Problem* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, Limited, 1939), p. 153.

²Max Braithwaite, *The Hungry Thirties: 1929-1940, Canada's Illustrated Heritage* (Toronto: Natural Science of Canada Limited, 1977).

³Canadian Youth Commission, *Youth and Recreation* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1946), pp. 78-79, 83.

⁴British Columbia, *Annual Reports of the Public Schools, 1934-1953* (Victoria: King's Printer) (hereinafter referred to as *Public Schools Report*).

Public Recreation in Canada,¹ an investigation of federal and provincial government recreation services, and of local services in selected communities. The establishment of Pro-Rec was described, in the section entitled "The Beginning of Provincial Programs in British Columbia". Eisenhardt's personal background was sketched, and the inaugural programme outlined. Under "Initial Federal Government Assistance", the influence of Eisenhardt and Pro-Rec was noted in the establishment of the physical fitness category of the *Unemployment and Agricultural Assistance Act* (1937), and of the provincial recreation schemes in both Alberta (1938) and Saskatchewan (1939). McFarland reported that Pro-Rec instructors assisted in the first leadership training summer schools in these two provinces, and noted that B.C.'s programme had "far reaching effects on municipal recreation development."² Mention was also made of the termination of Pro-Rec, in 1953, and the establishment of its successor, the Community Programmes Branch.³

Short references to Pro-Rec were found in many different sections of *Physical Education in Canada*. Orban, in his chapter entitled "The Fitness Movement", referred to the British Columbia and Alberta provincial programmes which developed prior to the passing of the *National Physical Fitness Act* of 1943, and stated that "they left an impact on these provinces which was not quickly forgotten."⁴ In the section outlining the history of the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, Blackstock described the interesting but

¹Elsie McFarland, *The Development of Public Recreation in Canada* (Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, 1970), pp. 48-50.

²*Ibid.*, p. 48.

³*Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁴Maurice L. Van Vliet (ed.), *Physical Education in Canada* (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall of Canada Limited, 1965), p. 238.

unsuccessful 1939 attempt of the Pro-Rec-dominated B.C. Branch to alter the eastern-controlled power structure of the national organization.¹ In "The Early Years", Munro commented on Pro-Rec as a measure developed to provide for unemployed youth.² The mass programme in fundamental gymnastics for women was mentioned in Wood's chapter on "Physical Education for Girls and Women".³ None of these references contained much information about the Pro-Rec programme. Furthermore, in one instance, the incorrect impression was given that Pro-Rec was a product of the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Scheme,⁴ when, in actual fact, Pro-Rec had been established almost three years before the initiation of the federal schemes to aid physical training projects.

Cosentino and Howell, in *A History of Physical Education in Canada*, traced the growth and development of physical education in Canada from its earliest days to the 1960's, and they restricted their study to programmes in the classrooms, gymnasias, and playing-fields during school hours. Physical education in British Columbia was not described in detail, but the establishment of Pro-Rec was mentioned. Reference was made to its use as a model by the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.⁵

In the area of world histories of physical education, only Van Dalen, *et al*, cited Pro-Rec, and this brief reference inaccurately named it as one of the provincial programmes encouraged by the *Youth Training*

¹*Ibid.*, p. 281-282.

²*Ibid.*, p. 6.

³*Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 156.

⁵Frank Cosentino and Maxwell Howell, *A History of Physical Education in Canada* (Toronto: General Publishing Company Limited, 1971), p. 54.

Act of 1939.¹ The standard reference for the history of recreation in the United States, *America Learns to Play: A History of Recreation*, by Dulles, presented an extensive treatment of recreation activities of the 1930's,² and Kraus, in *Recreation and Leisure in Modern Society*, described municipal and federal programmes initiated in the United States during the Depression;³ however, neither of these included Canadian activities or programmes.

Publications in Canadian sport history did not include references to programmes such as Pro-Rec, and it was only in Lappage's thesis on sports in Canada in the inter-war period that Pro-Rec was presented in the context of Canadian sport. The social background for sport in British Columbia during the Depression was described by Lappage, and the popular sports activities of that decade were examined. The Pro-Rec programme was cited as unique, and its first five years of operation were summarized.⁴ Lappage mentioned the influence of the B.C. programme on a similar scheme established in Alberta, and stated that inquiries about Pro-Rec were received from the United States, Scotland, Australia, and South America. It was also noted that Eisenhardt visited Ottawa in 1936 to address the National Employment Commission, with the result that "recreation and physical education were included in the four main objects of the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Scheme which came into effect

¹Deobold Van Dalen and Bruce Bennett, *A World History of Physical Education* (2nd ed.) (Inglewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1971), p. 554.

²Foster R. Dulles, *America Learns to Play: A History of Recreation* (2nd ed.) (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1965), pp. 319-386.

³Richard G. Kraus, *Recreation and Leisure in Modern Society* (2nd ed.) (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1971), pp. 203-205.

⁴Ronald S. Lappage, "Selected Sports and Canadian Society, 1921-1939," unpublished Ph.D. thesis, The University of Alberta, 1974, pp.33-36.

in 1937."¹

Nurmburg, in her history of gymnastics in Canada, placed particular emphasis on the role of Pro-Rec in promoting that sport in British Columbia. Gymnastics activities, demonstrations, and competitions were featured in every Pro-Rec centre, and the large numbers enrolled in these classes provided the stimulus for the development of competitive gymnastics in that province. Nurmburg described the gymnastics activities of the centres, the annual Pro-Rec gymnastics competitions, and the sponsorship by Pro-Rec of the 1939 Canadian Gymnastics Championships in Vancouver. This thesis included more detailed descriptions of specific Pro-Rec activities than any other reference researched by this writer, and covered the entire period of the programme's existence.²

With respect to government involvement in sport and recreation, the Pro-Rec programme received more extensive treatment. In 1977, Sawula completed his study of the *National Physical Fitness Act* of 1943, and it is with this work that the importance of the British Columbia programme in the formulation of the early federal recreation plans became apparent.³ Sawula also investigated the programmes that preceded the *National Physical Fitness Act*, namely the *Unemployment and Agricultural Assistance Act* (1937) and the *Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Act* (1939). In the formulation stages of these acts, the B.C. Pro-Rec programme was studied by federal authorities, and Eisenhardt was

¹*Ibid.*, p. 34.

²Reet Nurmburg, "A History of Competitive Gymnastics in Canada," unpublished M.A. thesis, The University of Alberta, 1970, pp. 194-208.

³Lorne Sawula, "The National Physical Fitness Act of Canada, 1943-1954," unpublished Ph.D. thesis, The University of Alberta, 1977.

successful in convincing them that recreation should be included in these early federal schemes. With the support of the Honourable Ian Mackenzie, Vancouver Member of Parliament and Minister of Pensions and National Welfare, Eisenhardt was also successful in promoting his ideas for a national physical fitness plan, and thus influenced the 1943 *National Physical Fitness Act*. The importance of Pro-Rec in the establishment of the National Physical Fitness programme was clearly acknowledged by Sawula, for he stated that the greatest influence upon the design of the *Act* appeared to come from Pro-Rec and from the League of Nations, and that British Columbia was "one of the leaders in the recognition of the value of physical fitness".¹

In an article published in the *Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Physical Education*, Gear discussed government-sponsored physical fitness programmes in Canada, and described Pro-Rec as "the first physical fitness programme conducted in Canada by a provincial government divorced from the school programme".² The main purposes of Pro-Rec were outlined, and reference was made to some of the highlights of the first few years of its operation, including its influence at the national level. Gear noted that the programme was based upon four important precepts: physical fitness was as important for work as it was for play; active participation was encouraged by a wide variety of activities; the star athlete was not the primary focus of the programme; and free public classes provided the opportunity for social experiences not otherwise

¹*Ibid.*, p. 8.

²James L. Gear, "Factors Influencing the Development of Government Sponsored Physical Fitness Programmes in Canada from 1850 to 1972," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Physical Education*, IV:2 (December, 1973), p. 15.

possible.¹ He concluded that changing societal needs produced changes in the Pro-Rec programme as the Depression ended and Canada went to war.²

In another article in the same issue of the *Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Physical Education*, West also examined government involvement in physical fitness, but at the federal level only. Very brief reference was made to Pro-Rec in this article; West merely noted that the British Columbia scheme used federal funds for physical training purposes, and that it was the largest programme of its kind in Canada at the start of World War II.³

Lappage's article, "British Columbia's Contribution to the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Program Through the Provincial-Recreation Program", dealt with this one important feature of Pro-Rec. Lappage briefly outlined Pro-Rec's development from 1934 to 1939, and described some of the activities presented at its centres. The provisions of the federal programmes for youth training were presented, and a connection between Pro-Rec and the physical fitness projects of these programmes was established. Lappage stated that:

. . . it was in the area of recreation for the unemployed and later the employed that British Columbia led the way and contributed most significantly to the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Program. Not only did British Columbia inspire the Federal Government to include "training projects of a physical nature to assist in the maintenance of health and morale" within the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Program, but also British Columbia provided assistance to the other Western Provinces in the establishment of similar programs.⁴

¹*Ibid.*, p. 16.

²*Ibid.*, p. 17.

³J. Thomas West, "Physical Fitness, Sport and The Federal Government 1909 to 1954," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Physical Education*, IV:2 (December, 1973), pp. 32-33.

⁴Ronald S. Lappage, "British Columbia's Contribution to the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Program Through the Provincial-Recreation Program", *Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Physical Education*, IX:1 (May, 1978), pp. 86-92.

Baka studied the involvement of provincial governments in sport in western Canada. His chapter on British Columbia covered the years 1871 to 1977, and included a concise presentation of Pro-Rec's developments as they related to sport in B.C. Encompassing a much larger time frame, and including four provinces, Baka's thesis placed Pro-Rec in a perspective not seen in other writings. He stated that it was the Pro-Rec "movement which actually ushered in an era highlighted by increasing government involvement in sport".¹ He presented a summary of the highlights of Pro-Rec's programme,² and concluded that Pro-Rec was "highly successful in influencing developments not only in B.C. but across Canada as a whole."³

Studies in the history of sport and physical education in British Columbia offered much more information about Pro-Rec than did studies in general areas. Arnold investigated sport and physical recreation in B.C. during the Depression and World War II. His thesis described the role of federal and provincial governments, and attention was given to the establishment of Pro-Rec and its growth during the time period of the study. Registration figures, numbers of employees, and numbers of Pro-Rec centres were quoted, with most of these figures taken from the *Annual Reports of the Public Schools*. The impact of federal physical fitness projects on Pro-Rec was described, but no mention was made of the influence of Pro-Rec in the establishment of these projects. Arnold also described significant developments in physical education programmes,

¹Richard Baka, "A History of Provincial Government Involvement in Sport in Western Canada", unpublished Ph.D. thesis, The University of Alberta, 1978, p. 22.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 27-41.

³*Ibid.*, p. 131.

supervised playgrounds, and professional associations during this time period.¹

Osborne's paper, "Origins of Physical Education in British Columbia", was extremely important, not only because it contained references to many of the significant factors affecting the Pro-Rec programme, but also because the author drew upon his own experience in physical education and sport in British Columbia to provide information not readily available in other secondary sources. Osborne described the Pro-Rec years in a section entitled "Growing Pains"; he spoke of the problems of operating centres in school buildings, and of centralization at a time when more responsibility should have been given to local areas.² He suggested that the "use of school buildings was ahead of its time, and the climate of opinion for the broader use of school facilities was not quite as receptive as it should have been."³ Osborne also discussed the role of Pro-Rec in his 1956 article, "Leadership in Recreation in British Columbia". Again, he referred to deficiencies in Pro-Rec that resulted from provincial centralization of programme and responsibility, producing problems that became more apparent after World War II. Reference was also made to post-war attempts to extend the sphere of Pro-Rec into the school physical education programme.⁴

¹Trevor Arnold, "The Status and Influence of Sport and Physical Recreational Activities in British Columbia During the Depression and World War II," unpublished M.P.E. thesis, The University of B.C., 1973, pp. 14-20 *passim*.

²Robert F. Osborne, "Origins of Physical Education in British Columbia," paper presented at the First Canadian Symposium on the History of Sport and Physical Education, Edmonton, Alberta, May 1970, p. 6.

³*Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁴Robert F. Osborne, "Leadership in Recreation in British Columbia," *Journal of the Canadian Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation*, XXIII:1 (September, 1956), p. 18.

The only study completely devoted to the Pro-Rec programme was that by Dakin, entitled "Government Sponsored Recreation in the Province of British Columbia". This was a short narrative of Pro-Rec, from its inception in 1934 to 1950; it described the origin of Pro-Rec, its initial programmes, growth of centres, criticisms of the project, Dominion-Provincial schemes, the influence of Pro-Rec in Alberta and Saskatchewan, programme expansion, summer schools, and curricula. This study did not follow Pro-Rec to its ending in 1953, and was primarily a summary of information from the *Public Schools Reports* and from interviews with two Pro-Rec directors.¹

Another short essay, "Recreation in Rural British Columbia", by Nixon, was much more critical of the Pro-Rec programme. The short section devoted to Pro-Rec was very instructive, as it illuminated some of the important problems that the plan encountered or caused. Nixon stated that the basic problem in rural areas lay in the failure of the central office to consider the interests and recreational needs of communities when appointing Pro-Rec leaders.²

In areas related to education, Pro-Rec received further attention. Hunt's "History of Physical Education in the Public Schools of British Columbia from 1918 to 1967," in addition to presenting a full account of developments in physical education, described Pro-Rec as "one of the most important developments in physical education during the

¹Eric S. Dakin, "Government Sponsored Recreation in British Columbia," unpublished B.P.E. graduating essay, The University of B.C., 1950, 24 pp.

²Howard R. Nixon, "Recreation in Rural British Columbia," unpublished B.P.E. graduating essay, The University of B.C., 1950, pp. 28-30.

depression period".¹ As with many other studies already reviewed, Hunt recounted the formation of the scheme and gave some information about the location of Pro-Rec centres in the programme's first year of operation, the leadership training system initiated by Eisenhardt and his chief instructors, and the basic programme offered in the centres. It was noted that, within the first year, "the worth of the Provincial Recreation programme was beyond doubt and its popularity assured."²

Johnson, in *A History of Public Education in British Columbia*, discussed adult education in considerable detail. Pro-Rec was described as a programme organized by the Department of Education during the Depression to build morale, and "keep physically and psychologically fit the thousands of people who might otherwise become as depressed emotionally as they were economically."³ The formation of Pro-Rec was described, with figures showing the substantial increases in enrollment in the first five years. Its role in wartime and post-war adult education was also sketched. Reference was made to the expansion of the programme in 1946, designed to broaden the field of recreational activities by sponsoring community centres and local recreational councils throughout the province.⁴

A study of playgrounds in Vancouver in the mid-1930's, by Howard, made no mention of Pro-Rec. However, the municipal playgrounds system

¹Edmund A. Hunt, "A History of Physical Education in the Public Schools of British Columbia from 1918-1967," unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Washington, 1967, p. 90.

²*Ibid.*, p. 93.

³F. Henry Johnson, *A History of Public Education in British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of B.C. Publications Centre, 1964), p. 229.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 230-231, 233.

was described fully, and important information was provided about supervised recreation on the city parks at the time that Pro-Rec was in its formative stage.¹

General histories of British Columbia were few in number, but Ormsby's *British Columbia: A History* was widely-acknowledged as the definitive work. This excellent reference related the full political and economic story of B.C., and the section dealing with the Depression was very informative. As with many general histories, however, social aspects received little attention, and recreational activities were not discussed.² Morley's history of Vancouver did mention some sports highlights, but the Pro-Rec programme was not included among these. His chapter on important incidents in Vancouver during the Depression provided information about the social climate that led to the establishment of Pro-Rec.³

Several periodical articles published during the early years of Pro-Rec offered additional insight into the scheme. In 1937, Eisenhardt wrote a general article for *Health* magazine which outlined: general purposes of the Branch; registration for the first three years of operation; publicity projects; and summer and winter activities.⁴ This article was principally of a promotional nature. A 1939 article in

¹Arthur M. Howard, "The Organization and Administration of City Playground Activities with Special Reference to Vancouver," unpublished M.A. thesis, The University of B.C., 1936.

²Margaret A. Ormsby, *British Columbia: A History* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, Ltd., 1958).

³Alan Morley, *Vancouver: From Milltown to Metropolis* (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1961) pp. 172-188.

⁴Ian Eisenhardt, "Keeping Fit the B.C. Way," *Health* (December, 1937), reprint (n.p.).

Saturday Night included many photographs of Pro-Rec participants and leaders, and described, in great detail, the annual mass display held in Vancouver, which was the highlight of the Pro-Rec season and a very popular spectator event.¹ In a 1940 issue of *New World* magazine, Pro-Rec was featured, with a photographic essay and a brief description of the programme.² The *Bulletin* of the Canadian Physical Education Association (renamed the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation in 1947) contained many brief references to Pro-Rec over the years, but one worthy of particular note was an article written by A.S. Lamb, Honorary President, and J.G. Lang, President of the C.P.E.A. in 1944, wherein Pro-Rec was described as "the most outstanding development in public recreation ever undertaken in this country."³

Finally, an examination of newspaper reports and articles over the nineteen years in which Pro-Rec operated revealed a much more complex and heterogeneous period of existence for that programme than might be discerned from most of the sources cited above. For example, the startling contrast between the eulogistic response of authorities at all levels of government in the 1930's and the public condemnation of Pro-Rec by the Minister of Education in 1953⁴ suggested problems not mentioned in most references.

¹Arthur P. Woollacott, "B.C. Gymnastic Movement May Sweep All Canada," *Saturday Night* (August 26th, 1939), pp. 13, 20.

²"British Columbia's Pro-Rec", *New World*, I:8 (October, 1940), pp. 4-8.

³A.S. Lamb and J.G. Lang, "Federal Fitness Director Has Had Varied Experience," *Bulletin*, Canadian Physical Education Association, XI:3 (March, 1944), p. 6.

⁴"Pro-Rec Called 'Octopus on Gov't", *Vancouver Sun*, April 30, 1953, p. 12.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

From the review of related literature, it was evident that most references to the British Columbia Pro-Rec programme held a number of characteristics in common. With few exceptions, they tended to be concerned primarily with the first five years of Pro-Rec's existence, and only in a few instances was consideration given to events and developments subsequent to 1939. One such study was Nurmberg's, but her comprehensive history was restricted to the sport of gymnastics. The only work dealing exclusively with Pro-Rec was that of Dakin; this was a short, twenty-five page descriptive essay and did not cover the last three years of the programme, when serious problems became more apparent. Sawula presented detailed information about the relationship of Pro-Rec to federal programmes, but no study had been found which thoroughly documented inter-provincial influences in the period prior to the establishment of the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Plan.

Another inadequacy of many of the writings investigated was their reliance upon other secondary sources, or upon the annual reports of the Pro-Rec Branch and speeches, reports or articles written by Pro-Rec directors. These latter references presented a serious weakness as sources of historical data. By nature, they were almost entirely approbatory, and problems or negative aspects were either ignored or rationalized.

It could readily be seen, then, that a complete and comprehensive history of Pro-Rec had not been written. However, this alone was not sufficient justification for such a project; the subject itself had to be significant and interesting enough to warrant such expenditure of time and energy. In the opinion of this writer, the British Columbia

programme was extremely important, and many reasons for this have already been presented. The assumption that Pro-Rec was influential in the establishment of similar programmes elsewhere had long been accepted by many authorities, and the studies of McFarland and Sawula supported this. In addition, it had been stated the Pro-Rec was important because it was the first public recreation programme in Canada to be sponsored by a senior government — and possibly the first of its kind in the British Empire.¹

Even if the ideas of Pro-Rec had not crossed provincial boundary lines, or served as a model for federal programmes, its history would still warrant full study. The impact of this free physical recreation programme on the people of B.C. must have been considerable, if registration figures were an indication.² Another area of importance was its influence on other recreation and sports agencies in B.C., and the effect of Pro-Rec on specific sports activities.

Finally, it was apparent, from a review of the literature, that Pro-Rec presented an interesting paradox. It was a highly successful programme, offering a remarkable breadth of physical activities to many thousands of participants, but, as time passed, it became a burden to the Provincial Government, and was discontinued. The reasons for this, and the lessons to be learned from the Pro-Rec experience could provide useful insights, for although prediction from past events is a controversial topic among historians, in Simri's words, "knowledge of the immediate past will turn out to be more important to the planning of the

¹Public Schools Report, 1938-39, p. 79.

²For the season 1938-39, Pro-Rec enrolled 26,831 members. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

future than knowledge of days long gone by."¹

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of the study was to write a comprehensive history of the Pro-Rec movement, 1934 to 1953, which would provide an accurate, analytical account of the programme, and which would include an examination of:

1. The unique features of the programme, and the reasons for its successes and failures.
2. The influence of Pro-Rec on public recreation programmes in other provinces and at the national level.
3. The influence of the leaders of Pro-Rec.
4. The inter-relationships between Pro-Rec and other agencies.

HYPOTHESES

Certain hypotheses or assumed propositions have been formulated as bases for interpretation and conclusions of this study. These are:

1. The Pro-Rec programme fulfilled an important need in the field of public recreation.
2. Pro-Rec served as a model for the establishment of similar recreation programmes in the three Prairie Provinces.
3. Pro-Rec was an important agency affecting the establishment of federal programmes of physical recreation and fitness.
4. The activities of the Pro-Rec Branch expanded beyond the original purpose and objectives of the scheme.

³Uriel Simri, "The Nature and Scope of the History of Physical Education and Sport", *Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Physical Education*, 1:1 (May, 1970), p. 1.

5. The close association between Pro-Rec and physical fitness resulted in negative developments in the field of recreation in British Columbia.
6. Pro-Rec did more than undergo a name change in 1953; it actually ceased to exist, and was replaced by a new administrative unit.
7. The causes of Pro-Rec's termination can be traced to factors inherent in its original organization.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The time limits of the study are from 1934 to 1953, the years in which Pro-Rec operated. However, appropriate information prior to 1934 is included, in order to establish the background to the formation of the programme.
2. The study of the influence of Pro-Rec on the establishment of provincial recreation programmes is limited to Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. The study of federal programmes is restricted to the *Unemployment and Agricultural Assistance Act* of 1937, the *Youth Training Act* of 1939, and the *National Physical Fitness Act* of 1943. Only the direct influence of Pro-Rec on the early stages of these federal and provincial programmes is studied; no attempt is made to analyze the effect of Pro-Rec on their achievements.
3. In examining the relationship between Pro-Rec and other recreation and sports agencies in B.C., only those activities and agencies which were directly affected by Pro-Rec are examined. The study does not attempt to speculate on possible indirect influences.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study is limited by the absence of complete records for the

Pro-Rec Branch, even though full records were maintained by staff members. Most of the official records were either lost in a head-office fire in 1945 or destroyed after Pro-Rec was terminated in 1953.¹ This presents the problem described by Commager when he speaks of the role of fortuity; in analyzing the materials about Pro-Rec that are available, "how do we know that what has come down to us is either the most important or the most authentic representation?"²

2. Another limitation of the study is a function of the brief span of time that has elapsed since Pro-Rec was in operation. It is more difficult to establish a historical perspective for a programme that functioned twenty-five years ago than for one which existed, for example, in the 1800's.
3. Ideally, one would hope to interview all individuals who held important positions with Pro-Rec. However, some have died, and others have moved away and cannot be located. Jerry Mathisen, who died some years after Pro-Rec was discontinued, was chief instructor for men throughout the entire time that the programme operated, and served as Director from 1944 to 1946; the inability to interview this influential person is a principal limitation.
4. Interviews are an important source of information, but also present problems. It is apparent to this writer that many individuals

¹The complete records for Pro-Rec that had been retained at the head office in Vancouver were incinerated after the programme was discontinued. (Interview with Hilda Keatley, former Pro-Rec Chief Instructress, Vancouver, B.C., February 21st, 1976). Since that time, archival policies have been established for all government departments.

²Henry S. Commager, *The Nature and the Study of History* (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, Inc., 1965), p. 44.

associated with Pro-Rec, either directly as staff members or indirectly through an outside agency, held, and still do hold, very strong views about aspects of the programme and about the actions of other individuals. Personal opinions can colour and distort the recollections of some people, especially when professional jealousy and pride are involved. This is obviously the case with some of the individuals interviewed, and it makes evaluation of the data more difficult.

5. Many more individuals could have been interviewed, including some staff members now living in the Northwest United States. Interviews could also have been conducted with more people living in B.C. However, the limitations of time and money curtail this aspect of the research.

PROCEDURE

The historical method was used, involving: collection of all available facts or data; external and internal criticism to establish and evaluate the authenticity and credibility of the data; analysis and synthesis of the data into an organized narrative; and interpretations, generalizations, and conclusions related to the problems and hypotheses described in earlier sections.

Data for the study were collected from various sources. The *British Columbia Annual Reports of the Public Schools* contained reports from the Recreational and Physical Education Branch, responsible for the administration of the Pro-Rec programme; these reports provided a basic frame of reference for the narrative. Newspaper coverage of Pro-Rec by the five metropolitan daily papers was extensive, and the *B.C. Newspaper*

Index proved to be an invaluable aid in this aspect of the research. The Public Archives in Ottawa were visited, and were found to contain the Eisenhardt Scrapbooks, as well as much valuable information about federal-provincial programmes. The B.C. Provincial Archives also contain some Pro-Rec material, the paucity of which is no doubt due to the file- and record-destroying incidents referred to above. The Vancouver City Archives were useful as a source of information about the relationships between Pro-Rec and both the Vancouver School Board and the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation.

Interviews were conducted with a number of former Pro-Rec directors and senior staff members, as well as with other individuals involved in important related agencies; these interviews were held in Quebec, California, Edmonton, and several communities in B.C. The interviews proved invaluable in two respects: the interviewer was able to obtain information not available in any other form, and some of these individuals had retained personal collections of Pro-Rec documents and materials not found in archives.

Other sources of information included:

1. The Vancouver Public Library, which contained a complete collection of *The Gymnast*, the Pro-Rec newsletter issued from 1935 to 1939;
2. Legislative and parliamentary records;
3. Canadian periodicals, including the *Bulletin* of the C.P.E.A.

Secondary sources were collected as well, and most have been cited in the review of related literature. These were particularly useful in the examination of federal programmes, physical education, and B.C.'s political and social climate during the Depression.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Selected terms, used in this investigation, were given the following definitions according to their usages in the time period of the study:

Recreation: that aspect of life which encompasses all activities engaged in voluntarily, for the satisfaction derived from the activity itself, or for the personal or social values perceived as outcomes. In this study, "recreation" refers to physical, cultural, and social pastimes, as well as hobbies and crafts.

Physical Recreation: that facet of recreation in which the individual participates actively in physical pursuits such as sports and games, dance, aquatics, and physical training programmes, or in individual outdoor activities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, cycling, mountain climbing, and skiing.

Public Recreation: refers to recreation opportunities organized or supported by public agencies or public funds. An element of governmental authority is implicit in public recreation, and is present at municipal, regional, provincial, or national levels. At the community level, public recreation exists in the form of centres established within a large municipality, operating for and funded by a specific segment of the municipality.

Sport: a generic term, used to identify a range of discrete activities which are referred to separately as "sports" or "games". For each separate sport, there is a demonstration of physical skill or exertion, and, usually, an element of competition. Most sports are played in

accordance with an authorized set of rules, and most sports operate under the aegis of a regulating organization or sports governing body. Examples of separate sports are: field hockey, squash, tennis, hunting, gymnastics, orienteering, and soccer. Sport is either organized or unorganized, as defined below.

Organized Sport: is characterized by regular competition, for the purpose of declaring a winner, in some predetermined manner. Organized sport involves time schedules, specific location of competition, and a prior commitment by participants to the competition as scheduled. Organized sport is usually arranged by local, regional, provincial, or national sports governing bodies or institutions. As an example, tennis is played as an organized sport when the player enters a club, city, or provincial tournament.

Unorganized Sport: is often synonymous with "informal sport", in the sense that there is an absence of any structure for formal competition. Unorganized sport is casual and often spontaneous. It includes participation in a game through a club or class, as well as informal games played between individuals entirely apart from any organization. For example, tennis may be played as a recreational sport on the courts of a private club or at a public park. The essential difference between organized and unorganized sport is the presence or absence of a structured form of competition, the intent of which is to determine a winner.

Physical Education: in this study, refers exclusively to the curricular subject that is offered in the school system and in colleges and universities.

Physical Fitness: a positive condition of physical health, generally associated with the muscular and cardio-vascular systems, which enables the individual to carry out daily tasks easily and efficiently, with enough additional strength and vigour for physical emergencies and for participation in physical recreational activities of the individual's choice.

Pro-Rec: the term that was, and is, the accepted phrase used in reference to the programme that is the subject of this study. During its first three years of operation, it was called "Provincial Recreation", and the centres where classes were held were known as "Provincial Recreation Centres". But in 1937, Eisenhardt announced the results of a contest to produce a "short-cut to expressing the name of his department"; the winning name was "Pro-Rec",¹ and it was quickly adopted by the Branch and by newspapers. It came to be used in many different ways, denoting the Branch itself, the total programme, a single centre, and a movement that spread beyond B.C.'s borders. The usage of "Pro-Rec" became so widespread, and it so effectively replaced its antecedent, that this writer has encountered many individuals who were members of Pro-Rec centres, but who did not know that the term was a contraction of "Provincial Recreation". The first use of the term "Pro-Rec" in an annual report was in 1938-39, although newspapers were using it long before then. By 1941, *The Gymnast*, the Branch publication, had been replaced by a newsletter called *Pro-Rec*. Deputy Minister of Education F.T. Fairey, in his 1952 report on the programme, stated in the title that it was "commonly known as 'Pro-Rec'", and used that term throughout

¹"Eisenhardt's Baby Known as 'Pro-Rec'", *Vancouver Sun*, October 7th, 1937, p. 18.

his report.¹ Osborne stated that the programme was "popularly called Pro-Rec,"² and all of the references in *Physical Education in Canada* used the same terminology.³ In none of these instances, with the exception of Fairey's title, was the term placed in quotation marks; this indicates that the writers did not feel that they were using an informal nickname. It is apparent, then, that the usage of "Pro-Rec" was such that it did in fact become the proper name of the programme; the earlier phrase, "Provincial Recreation", became a more general term, and thus had no particular meaning, other than as a form of public recreation provided by a provincial agency. Therefore, in this study, the term Pro-Rec is used, without quotation marks, to identify the programme being investigated.

Recreational and Physical Education Branch: the name of the British Columbia Department of Education which, from 1934 to 1953, was responsible for the organization and administration of the Pro-Rec programme.

Programme: is used in reference to the sum total of the activities, endeavours, and events of the Pro-Rec Branch. Synonymous terms are "plan", "project", and "scheme". When reference is made to other types of programmes, adjectives are used to identify them. Thus, "centre programme" is used when speaking of the activities presented on a regular basis at a Pro-Rec centre; "display programme" is used in speaking of the events presented at a mass display.

¹British Columbia, Department of Education, F.T. Fairey, Deputy Minister of Education, "Report of the Recreation and Physical Education Branch, commonly known as 'Pro-Rec'", mimeographed, Victoria, B.C., November, 1952.

²Osborne, "Origins", *op. cit.*, p. 23.

³Van Vliet, *op. cit.*

Centre: the separate, physical location at which regular Pro-Rec activities or classes were conducted; generally, centres were established in schools, churches, or community halls.

Member: the individual who registered at a Pro-Rec centre, or who belonged to a Pro-Rec sports group, such as a soccer team.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The study is organized into three major sections. The first section (Chapter 2) provides a background for the Pro-Rec programme, and briefly describes:

1. Political, social, and economic conditions operating at the time Pro-Rec was established.
2. Organized and recreational sport in B.C. sport during the 1930's.
3. Developments in physical education in B.C. during the 1920's and 1930's.
4. Playground programmes in Vancouver during the 1930's.

A narrative description of Pro-Rec then follows, in which three time periods have been delineated: The Depression (1934-1939), World War II (1939-1945), and Post-War Developments (1945-1953). Within each time period, events are discussed under the following headings: general developments, leadership, programme of activities, organization and administration, promotion and publicity, federal-provincial relationships, and special features.

The third section is an interpretation and analysis of the entire programme, and includes discussion of: the role and influence of Pro-Rec leadership, the effects of provincial politics on the programme, the changing concepts of community recreation, Pro-Rec and school

physical education, contributions of Pro-Rec to organized sports, relationships between Pro-Rec and other programmes (federal and provincial), and an evaluation of Pro-Rec's achievements and influences.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND CONDITIONS RELATED TO THE STUDY

Pro-Rec was created in 1934 as a partial answer to one of the social needs that resulted from the upheaval of the Great Depression. The Depression affected every facet of society — economic, social, and political — and presented problems never before experienced by Canadians. In the words of Horn, it ranked "among the worst disasters of a disaster-filled century."¹ The social and economic dislocations of the 1930's affected many of those agencies concerned with physical education and recreation with which Pro-Rec would later be associated. In addition, these areas were undergoing significant developmental changes: physical education was experiencing important philosophic modifications; sport was reinforcing new patterns established after World War I; and community playgrounds were still in their early stages of growth. In this background chapter, the important social and economic conditions which influenced the creation and early development of Pro-Rec are outlined. Consideration is also given to physical education in British Columbia schools, and to recreational activities popular in the 1930's.

Although this chapter purports to present the situation as it existed in the province of British Columbia, most of the information is related to the city of Vancouver. Historical accounts of B.C. during the 1930's tend to focus upon Vancouver, not only in connection with the

¹Horn, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

Depression itself, but also with areas of physical activity important to this study. In addition, Vancouver has been the largest and most influential community in the province for many decades; it has the greatest influence on other regions of British Columbia, despite the fact that Victoria is the capital city.

THE "DIRTY THIRTIES"

In October, 1929, all the black clouds met in one place, the New York Stock Exchange, and the thunderbolt struck. Stock prices fell disastrously, a sign that the American Economic System had been smashed. Things were never to be the same, in the U.S., in Canada, in the rest of the world.¹

This popular concept of the start of the Depression is perhaps an oversimplification of an extremely complex phenomenon, but it does give an indication of the shock that rudely awakened many Canadians who had been riding high on the crest of prosperity and unlimited growth during the late 1920's. Inflated values, paper-stock market fortunes, a high level of construction debt, and injudicious expansion of businesses were some of the conditions that caused the Canadian economy to collapse, when major U.S. business houses started to fail. The effect of the Depression in Canada was more severe than in any other western nation, with the exception of the United States. After World War I, these two North American countries had suffered far less from the dislocations of world economy than European states, and had experienced a boom during the last years of the '20's not felt in other parts of the world. As Horn stated, "the older continent . . . had not as far to fall as North America after 1929."²

¹Broadfoot, *op. cit.*, p. viii.

²Horn, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

Unlike the United States, however, Canada's economic situation was seriously aggravated by another crisis, which had developed just prior to the stock market crash. 1928 had seen a bumper wheat crop produced in the major wheat-growing countries and a world surplus of that commodity upon which most of Canada's export market depended.¹ The result was a collapse of international wheat prices in 1929, and a drastic reduction in the movement of wheat and flour in Canada. This affected transportation companies as well as Prairie farmers, and the sustained wheat-market slump, by this time worsened by the Depression, began to have ever-widening consequences on other aspects of the economy. Those industries which supplied producers' goods to farmers and railways were soon feeling the effects of reduced sales, and lowered production in turn affected other industries. Thus, the decrease in wheat exports was felt throughout the economy as a whole.

As the combined effects of depressed export markets and deflated economy gained momentum, incomes fell and luxury goods were left unsold. Small businesses failed, and this eventually caused the failure of other businesses as well. Banks withheld credit and foreclosed on mortgages, causing thousands to lose their homes for inability to make payments. What had been an expanding economy in the 1920's suddenly failed, and most Canadians found their standard of living drastically lowered.

As if the economic conditions were not serious enough, the Canadian Prairies, particularly the southern area known as the Palliser Triangle, entered into a period of sustained drought. For seven years, starting in 1931, the Prairie wheat crops failed, and the drought

¹Walter D. Young, *Democracy and Discontent* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1969), p. 43.

conditions were further exacerbated by afflictions of grasshoppers, hail, and wheat rust. For most Prairie farmers, 1937 was the low point of the Depression, and Saskatchewan, the hardest-hit province, did not harvest a profitable crop until 1939.¹

Unemployment and the resultant need for public relief were the most persistent and devastating results of the economic collapse. For most of Canada, 1933 was the nadir of the Depression, and in that year, 26.6 per cent of all wage earners in Canada were unemployed.² Loss of income forced thousands of families to exhaust their savings, and having become pauperized, apply for public relief. In April of 1933, approximately fifteen per cent of the total population depended upon the humiliating "dole" for physical survival.³ The gloom and despair that formed the bitter heritage of the Depression were soon felt in all parts of the country, as people saw their businesses, their homes, their savings, and dreams disappear overnight. Young people with plans for higher education were forced to forget or postpone them, and many families were separated when the head of the household left to search elsewhere for a job and some money.

The initial response of the federal government was to provide funds for relief, leaving its administration in the control of provincial and local governments. Later, subsistence-level labour camps were established, in which single, unemployed men were put to work at menial and dreary tasks, adding to their humiliation and despair.⁴ In 1933,

¹For a graphic account of the conditions on the Prairies during the 1930's, the reader is referred to Chapter 11 in *The Winter Years*, by James Gray (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1966).

²Richter, *op.cit.*, p. 9.

³Horn, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

⁴Richter, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

the Department of National Defence assumed control of these camps, and operated them across Canada until 1936, when dissatisfaction became so great that they were disbanded. Following this, half of the men in these camps were placed in railways jobs, and the remainder were left to shift for themselves; provisions were also made for farm placement of homeless men in the Prairies, and works projects were organized for men in British Columbia.¹ During this entire period the recognition of federal responsibility for the plight of the unemployed did not extend to single women or to transient families; relief for these groups was left to the provinces, and no extra federal funds were provided.

One of the motives behind the establishment of federal work camps was the fear aroused by the single men who started to roam the country, illegally "riding the rods", or freight trains, as they searched for employment. Large groups began to congregate on the outskirts of urban communities, or in slum areas within large cities, and "hobo jungles" became the only home for these wanderers. The menace of these single men was manifested, in the view of authorities and leading citizens, by the many demonstrations inspired and organized by the Communist Party. The work camps were therefore established in isolated areas, and controlled by rigid military discipline; complainers were labelled "Red", immediately shipped out, and listed as dangerous agitators in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police files.²

In British Columbia, the economy had been seriously affected from the very beginning of the Depression; the building trade, shipping,

¹*Ibid.*, pp. 185-6.

²H. Blair Neatby, *The Politics of Chaos: Canada in the Thirties* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1972), p. 34.

the Okanagan fruit industry, lumbering, fishing, and mining all suffered reverses in this province which depended heavily upon primary industries. In Vancouver, the number of unemployed persons had increased three hundred per cent by January, 1930,¹ and bread lines were forming outside the City Relief Office.² Vancouver soon began to feel the effects of conditions elsewhere in B.C., as thousands of unemployed men came to the city from shut-down mines, logging camps, and fish canneries.³ By the winter of 1932-33, approximately fifteen per cent of the city's population was living on relief. One of the most unfortunate effects of the Depression was the loss of homes through the inability of individuals to pay taxes, and hundreds of Vancouver homeowners forfeited their dwellings in this tragic manner.⁴

British Columbia had more than its fair share of unemployment problems, however, because it was to this far-western province that thousands of the country's homeless and jobless drifted. They came for many reasons, the chief one being the comparatively mild climate that allowed them to sleep outside in the winter without freezing to death.⁵ Transients were also attracted to B.C. because its primary industries offered better employment opportunities, or because it was noted for its

¹Ormsby, *op. cit.*, p. 443.

²Raymond Hull, *et al*, *Vancouver's Past* (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1974), p. 79.

³In mid-summer, 1932, the number receiving relief in selected B.C. cities were: Greater Vancouver, 17%; Victoria, 7.5%; New Westminster, 12%; Port Alberni, 37%; and Fernie, 47%. Horn, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

⁴Hull, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

⁵Charles Humphries, ed., *The Great Depression*, C 13, *The Canadian Series of Jackdaws* (Toronto: Clarke Irwin and Company Ltd., n.d.), third section.

generous public health and welfare services.¹ Throughout the Depression, B.C. had more transients than any other part of Canada. In August, 1931, over sixty-five hundred interprovincial transients were registered there, and in January, 1935, twelve per cent of the people on relief were classified as transients. During the four years that relief camps were operated by the Department of National Defence, B.C. enrolled approximately one-third of the total national camp population.²

In Vancouver, the most obvious manifestations of this influx of unemployed were: panhandlers, or "tin-canners"; marches and demonstrations to demand better camp conditions or work for wages; and the hobo shanty towns or "jungles" that sprang up along False Creek, under viaducts, next to the city dump, or near the railway tracks. The jungle adjacent to the city dump was in a particularly fortuitous location, for it provided easy access to old automobiles which were converted into "bunkhouses" as shelters against the rain. The conditions in these jungles were, of course, deplorable; many of the men there were close to starvation, and subsisted solely on handouts from relief offices or from church groups.³ The demoralizing effect of this life cannot be over-estimated, for many of these men were not drifters by choice but skilled tradesmen who would have worked at anything, if only they had been given a chance. In 1931, the city of Vancouver ordered the jungles razed, and road work camps were opened that year by the provincial

¹Richter, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

²M.E. Lane, "Unemployment During the Depression: The Problem of the Single Unemployed Transient in B.C., 1930-1938," unpublished M.A. thesis, The University of British Columbia, 1966, pp. 11-12.

³Andrew Roddan, *God in the Jungles: The Story of the Man Without a Home* (Vancouver: n.n., 1931), p. 55.

government.

As the Depression continued, with conditions worsening each year, Vancouver began to have serious problems with the large group of unemployed who congregated there. In 1935, this city was "occupied" by seventeen hundred men from the relief camps striking for work and wages; the Riot Act was read by the Mayor, but many citizens sympathized with the demands of the strikers. A few weeks later, over one thousand men started the "On-to-Ottawa Trek" from Vancouver, with more joining the group as it moved east on freight cars; this attempt to place the grievances of the unemployed before the federal government ended in the blood-stained Regina riot of July 1st.¹ Then, in 1938, hundreds of homeless and unemployed men marched on Vancouver once again, and occupied public buildings in a "sit-down strike" that lasted more than five weeks. When the men were forcibly ejected from the Post Office, they rampaged through city streets, smashing windows and causing damage in excess of thirty thousand dollars.² As Ormsby stated, "Vancouver [was] more scarred by the depression than any other city in Canada".³

Lack of recreational opportunities, particularly in the work camps, was another serious problem which community leaders tried to resolve. A committee visiting the camps early in 1934 concluded that better recreational facilities were urgently required if the despondency among the men in these camps was to be diminished.⁴ In 1935, the Vancouver Local Council of Women forwarded, to their national

¹Horn, *op. cit.*, pp. 308-309.

²Ormsby, *op. cit.*, p. 468.

³*Ibid.*, p. 469.

⁴Lane, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-73.

organization, a resolution that gives some insight into the inadequacy of camp recreation and the means by which people sought to improve it:

Whereas we believe that the voluntary efforts of women's organizations to provide recreational facilities and physical training in unemployment relief camps should be continued, the Local Council of Women of Vancouver is of the opinion that this situation is not adequately met and would petition the Department of National Defence to establish an organized department of physical education in all camps held under their administration.¹

General McNaughton, Army Chief of Staff, urged the federal government to provide funds for education and recreation opportunities in the camps,² but not until the Liberal government was elected in 1935 were grants made toward minimum recreational facilities.³

In 1933, with the Depression at its worst point and unemployment numbers the greatest of all time, a provincial election was held in B.C., and the voters totally rejected the Conservative party that had ruled since 1928. The Liberals, led by T.D. "Duff" Pattulo, regained control, and to the surprise of many political experts, were officially opposed by the new party of the left, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (C.C.F.). Pattulo had campaigned on a platform of "Work and Wages", and had promised a new social order not unlike that pledged by Roosevelt in the American election of the same year. In fact, Pattulo's programme became known as the "Little New Deal".⁴

The social philosophy of Pattulo's government is of significance

¹Mary P. Powell, "Response to the Depression: Three Representative Women's Groups in British Columbia," unpublished M.A. thesis, The University of British Columbia, 1966, p. 83.

²Lane, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

³*Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁴Margaret Ormsby, "T. Dufferin Pattulo and the Little New Deal," in *The Dirty Thirties*, edited by Michiel Horn (Toronto: The Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1972), p. 620.

to this study, for it was in the atmosphere of government assumption of moral responsibility for the welfare of the people that Pro-Rec was created. Pattulo believed that in a time of economic depression, the government must create jobs and pay wages,¹ and his programme included public works projects, health plans, marketing controls, and tax cuts. By 1937, his government had implemented: an industrial relations board, an agricultural marketing board, a provincial economic council, improved welfare services, a public works programme, reforms to the school system, reduction in the industrial work-week, an increased minimum wage, and assistance to primary industries.² This programme had far-reaching effects and "helped move Canada forward on the path of state-planning for economic and social betterment."³

Pattulo's cabinet was composed, for the most part, of men of character and personality, many of whom were new to politics and therefore not open to attack as "machine politicians."⁴ One of these outstanding figures was Dr. George M. Weir, drafted from the University of British Columbia, where he had been head of the Department of Education. Weir became Provincial Secretary and Minister of Education in the new Liberal cabinet, and brought his reformist zeal to many facets of provincial life. It was under the aegis of Weir's Department of Education that Pro-Rec was inaugurated by the provincial government.

Although the year 1933 marked the beginning of economic recovery

¹Ormsby, *British Columbia: A History*, op. cit., p. 456.

²Ormsby, "Pattulo", in Horn, op. cit., p. 632.

³*Ibid.*, p. 633.

⁴F.H. Soward, "British Columbia Goes Liberal," *Canadian Forum*, XIV (December, 1933), p. 87.

for most of Canada, the situation was still far from bright. Unemployment, which had started to decrease in 1934, rose sharply again in 1937 and 1938; in June, 1937, the average unemployment rate was 12.5 per cent.¹ As described earlier, certain sections of the Prairies were severely affected by drought, and the farmers there suffered greater hardships in 1938 than in any other single year.² There is general agreement that World War II ended the Depression in Canada, and this is usually understood to be in the year 1939. In actual fact, the Depression was not completely over until 1942, when military service and wartime production demands finally eliminated the economic stagnation of the 1930's.³ For many individuals, then, the Depression lasted thirteen years, long enough to significantly alter the attitudes and beliefs of three generations of Canadians.

LEISURE-TIME PURSUITS AND RECREATION DURING THE 1930's

The bleak environment of the Depression was not entirely without mitigation, and most Canadians found many opportunities to enjoy life. Not everyone was pauperized, or even poor. Many families were better off during the '30's than ever before, because prices dropped so sharply; if the head of a household was able to retain his employment and avoid salary reductions, he often found that his spending power was actually greater than in the previous decade.⁴ Families whose savings were intact were able to purchase, for taxes, the homes that had been beyond their means in the '20's. Indeed, the middle-class of Canadian society was

¹Horn, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

²Humphries, *op. cit.*, 1st section.

³Horn, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

⁴Humphries, *op. cit.*, 3rd section.

not seriously disturbed; it was the rural and working-classes which bore the brunt of the Depression.

Leisure time pursuits continued to play an important role in the life of Canadians, and in some instances became the only escape from reality. One of the most important diversions of this period was the radio, and the *Happy Gang* and *Hockey Night in Canada* were widely enjoyed,¹ along with American favourites such as *Amos 'n' Andy*, *Just Plain Bill*, *The Goldbergs*, and *Easy Aces*.² The radio was particularly important to the housewife, who could keep one ear on the outside world while she went about her work at home.

Perhaps the most important form of escapism was the fantasy world of the motion-picture. The 1930's was the heyday of musical extravaganzas and comedies, the "Golden-Age-Of-Going-To-The-Movies".³ Adult admission was as low as twenty-five cents, and Saturday afternoon matinees for children cost only five cents. These matinees usually included cartoons, the newsreel, and a segment of the current adventure serial, as well as two feature films. Free china was the drawing-card of certain mid-week showings, and many Canadian kitchens of the '30's were stocked with the most remarkable assortment of plates, bowls, cups, and saucers. In British Columbia, the 1933 per capita expenditure on movies was \$3.60, the highest in Canada.⁴

The Depression years also saw many fads appear and disappear, as

¹Neatby, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

²Humphries, *op. cit.*, 5th section.

³Broadfoot, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

⁴Canadian Welfare Council, *Recreation and Leisure Time Services in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Welfare Council, 1936), p. 39.

people sought inexpensive diversions that would make their lives more enjoyable. This was the period in which contract bridge, crossword puzzles, bingo, price contests, slot machines, and the board game, "Monopoly" entered the recreation scene.¹ One of the most interesting of Depression phenomena was miniature golf, which quickly rose to spectacular heights of popularity and then declined just as abruptly, all in the space of one year — 1930. Built on hundreds of vacant lots, miniature golf courses sprang up overnight, as the craze swept both Canada and the United States. For a few cents, one could play a game that involved hitting a golf ball with a putter across a surface of crushed gravel or hard-packed sand, through tin pipes and into cups set in the ground around the eighteen-hole course.² It was extremely popular with the poorer class, and when the Lord's Day Alliance in Vancouver pressured the police to close down Sunday operations, a loud protest was raised; vocal citizens pointed out that miniature golf operators should not be prosecuted, when private golf clubs were permitted to function on Sundays without restriction.³

Ballroom dancing was a fashionable form of social recreation during the '30's; this was the decade of swing music, and the popular dances of the day included truckin', the shag, and the Lambeth Walk.⁴ Saturday afternoon dances at the Hotel Vancouver were frequented by the social set, while dancing in the home was made easier by the simple expedient of pouring boracic acid on the large front porch to make it

¹Dulles, *op. cit.*, pp. 375-378.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 375-376; see also Broadfoot, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

³*Vancouver Sun*, September 19, 1930, p. 6.

⁴Dulles, *op. cit.*, p. 371.

PLATE I



Miniature Golf Course, Georgia and Cardero Streets,
Vancouver, 1930 (Vancouver City Archives)

more slippery. Band concerts in Stanley Park were popular Vancouver entertainments, and bonfires on the many city beaches provided simple summer evening enjoyment. Picnics were also regular events, organized by Sunday schools or business companies. Many Vancouver picnics were held on Bowen Island, reached by a two-hour boat trip, and provided a full day of swimming, novelty races, beauty contests, and softball games. Vancouverites could also play pitch-and-putt golf in Stanley Park¹, and, until it burned down in 1936, the Denman Street Arena was the site of hockey games, marathon dances, and six-day bicycle races.²

There was no shortage of sports activities in a city that had always had a strong tradition of sports participation. The athletically-inclined could: play tennis on the many public courts; organize street games of baseball, or "kick-the-can"; play golf at the private clubs or on the few public links; go ice skating on Lost Lagoon in cold winters; fish from the Stanley Park sea wall; play badminton in the clubs that were organized throughout the city; swim in the many lovely beaches of English Bay, or in the Crystal Pool; and play softball at one of the neighbourhood public parks.³ Access to the North Shore mountains made skiing more popular among Vancouver's outdoor enthusiasts, and summer cottages began to dot the coastline from Pender Harbour to Boundary Bay, as people began to frequent the resort areas for summer-long family vacations.⁴

¹Interview with Marjorie Milne (née Shorney), former Supervisor, Vancouver Playgrounds, Vancouver, B.C. May 9th, 1977.

²Chuck Davis, *The Vancouver Book* (North Vancouver: J.J. Douglas Ltd., 1976), pp. 7, 11, 366, 415.

³Interview with Marjorie Milne, May 9th, 1977.

⁴Morley, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

Many private agencies gave their support to recreation programmes during the 1930's. Philanthropic citizens contributed toward fresh-air camps so that underprivileged children could spend some time in the country during the summer.¹ The Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. were very active throughout this period, and both organizations experienced an increase in membership.² Many of the province's ethnic societies and organizations conducted active programmes, particularly in the area of folk dance. The Scottish Country Dance Society sponsored a dance festival in 1934³ and, in 1935, the Vancouver Hungarian Women's Association was established and included folk dance in its programme of activities.⁴ In 1937, the Danish Community of Vancouver formed a Folk Dance Group,⁵ and in 1938, the Alpen Club Schuhplatter group, from the German community in Vancouver, won the dance division of the Canadian Folk Festival.⁶

An important event for ethnic organizations was the first Canadian Folk Festival, staged in Vancouver in 1933. It was the first folk festival held in North America, and was organized by Mrs. Nellie McCay, a pioneer of Canadian multi-culturalism. This festival, which was to be followed by many more during the years to come, featured ethnic groups from coast to coast, and folk dances received prominence in the

¹Horn, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

²Arnold, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

³*Bulletin*, Canadian Physical Education Association, II:4 (November, 1934), p. 11.

⁴John Norris, *Strangers Entertained: A History of Ethnic Groups in British Columbia* (Vancouver: British Columbia Centennial '71 Committee, 1971), p. 169.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 134.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 104.

four-day event.¹

1933 saw the demise of a popular institution that had brought entertainment, education, and culture to North Americans since the early 1900's. This was the "Chautauqua", a travelling tent show that provided small communities with music, live theatre, and noted lecturers. The first Canadian circuit opened in 1917, visiting parts of rural British Columbia.² The Chautauqua movement continued into the early 1930's, but was gradually replaced by the radio and "talking pictures".³

Although the provincial, and later, the federal governments, contributed toward physical recreation programmes during the Depression, this aid did not include the building or up-grading of facilities for general recreation, such as was seen in the United States. There, as part of the National Youth Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps, camps, buildings, picnic grounds, trails, swimming pools, parks, and playgrounds were built; state park systems were established, and community centres, stadiums, and athletic complexes were constructed between 1932 and 1937.⁴ The economy-stimulating Works Progress Administration provided recreational leadership in local communities, and millions of Americans benefited from the recreation programmes established in this manner.⁵ In Canada, federal projects resulted in the improvement of some municipal parks, particularly in Montreal, but programmes were

¹Ann Rivkin, "Thank You, Nellie McCay, Folkfest Pioneer", *Westworld*, May-June, 1978, pp. 47-48, 55-56.

²Letter to the writer from Sheilagh J. Jameson, author of *Chautauqua in Canada* (Calgary: Glenbow Museum, 1979), Calgary, April 5th, 1979.

³Victoria Case and Robert O. Case, *We Called It Culture: The Story of Chautauqua* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company Inc., 1948), *passim*.

⁴Kraus, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

⁵*Ibid.*

drastically curtailed across the country,¹ and Canadian recreation did not benefit from Depression measures to the extent seen in the United States.

ORGANIZED SPORT DURING THE DEPRESSION

As a part of recreation, organized sport played a very important role during the 1930's. Lappage, in his thesis on "Selected Sports in Canadian Society, 1921-1939", discusses the general characteristics of sport in British Columbia that set it apart from sport in other provinces. Foremost among these factors was the American influence, which resulted from B.C.'s dependence on the Pacific Northwest states for sports competition. This was a function of the geographical isolation that existed in those days, when air travel to other parts of Canada was unheard of and train travel too time-consuming or expensive.² There was also a strong British influence in B.C. sports, due primarily to the large percentage of residents who were of British origin. This was seen in the popularity of sports such as rugby, cricket, soccer, lawn bowling, golf, badminton, field hockey, rowing, track and field, and tennis.³ The climate produced another important difference from the rest of Canada. Outdoor team sports such as rugby and soccer were played throughout the winter, while curling and ice hockey did not have the base of participation found in the Prairies or Central Canada.⁴

British Columbians certainly did not want for opportunities to participate in organized sport during the Depression, either as players'

¹McFarland, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

²Lappage, "Selected Sports in Canadian Society", *op. cit.*, p. 12.

³*Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

or as spectators. The calibre of rugby was the highest in Canada, with schools serving as a feeder system for the many leagues that operated for all age levels.¹ Several touring rugby teams visited B.C. between the wars, and the B.C. Rugby Union was one of the few sports governing bodies that received provincial funds during the 1930's.² Women's field hockey also benefited from touring teams when an Australian team visited Vancouver in 1936, and played a local team in Canada's first international match in this sport.³ Soccer was popular, especially with the very partisan supporters who attended Saturday afternoon matches at Conn Jones Park, near the Exhibition Grounds.⁴ When the North Vancouver Dominion championship soccer team arrived in Vancouver after its 1938 victory, it was loudly acclaimed by thousands of fans from the entire Lower Mainland.⁵ During the summer, the British Columbia Mainland Cricket League was in full swing, more for the participants than the spectators;⁶ this sport also operated a league in the Okanagan Valley, where the British influence was still strong.⁷ Lacrosse entered into a period of revival during the '30's, with the declaration, in 1931, of box lacrosse as the official game of the Canadian Lacrosse Association.⁸ Large numbers of spectators were attracted to the game, and by 1934, its popularity had reached the

¹*Ibid.*, p. 18.

²Baka, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

³Florence Strachan, ed., *Field Hockey Jubilee Booklet* (Vancouver: Greater Vancouver Grass Hockey Association, 1956), p. 6.

⁴Interview with Marjorie Milne, May 9th, 1977.

⁵Lappage, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

⁶Lappage, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

⁷Broadfoot, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

⁸Nancy Howell and Maxwell Howell, *Sports and Games in Canadian Life: 1700 to the Present* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, Ltd., 1969), p. 311.

heights attained at the turn of the century.¹ By 1939, a professional league of four teams had been formed,² and throughout the Depression, a four-team women's lacrosse league operated in the Vancouver area.³

Baseball leagues, with teams sponsored by commercial enterprises, drew large crowds to the athletic parks.⁴ Softball experienced a strong increase in popularity during the 1930's, chiefly because it was inexpensive and appealed to all ages and both sexes; many industrial and office leagues were formed, and the sport was played extensively by the men assigned to work camps throughout B.C.⁵ Its popularity was continent-wide and, in 1938, the Amateur Softball Association of America "claimed a membership larger than that of any other amateur sports body in the world".⁶ Basketball was also an extremely popular team sport and, in Vancouver, its participation numbers were second only to those for soccer.⁷ B.C. basketball teams were often national champions, and the 1935 Victoria team was the sixth British Columbia winner in eleven seasons of Dominion competition.⁸

Racquet sports had always been popular in B.C. with its strong British heritage, and the Depression years saw no decrease in participation. Badminton increased in popularity during this period, with private clubs catering to the well-to-do, and churches, dance halls, barns, and schools providing gymnasias for others less affluent. The

¹Lappage, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

²*Ibid.*, p. 28.

³Arnold, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

⁴*Daily Province*, July 23rd and 24th, 1934.

⁵Lappage, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁶Dulles, *op. cit.*, p. 363.

⁷Lappage, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

⁸Lappage, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

numbers of serious tournament players grew so large that the 1935 Vancouver championships were extended to four days; that year also saw the inauguration of the city junior tournament.¹ Tennis continued to draw many enthusiasts, and the popular Stanley Park Public Courts Tournament was held for the first time in 1931.²

Track and field in B.C. was strong during the Depression, following the lead set by Vancouver's Percy Williams in the 1928 Olympic Games and the 1930 British Commonwealth Games. In 1932, Duncan McNaughton, of Kelowna, won a gold medal in the high jump at the Olympic Games in Los Angeles,³ and in 1936, four B.C. athletes were members of the Canadian team that participated in the Berlin Olympic Games.⁴ Swimming had always been popular in B.C., with the Vancouver and Victoria Amateur Swimming Club vying for top honours year after year. Swim clubs travelled around the Lower Mainland for regular meets against each other.⁵ Yachting appeared to prosper, for the Kitsilano Yacht Club opened in the early 30's.⁶ Golf also increased in popularity, although the Depression did have some adverse effects on the membership of expensive private clubs. But public courses absorbed these players and more, as golf became less an aristocratic sport, and more a sport for all classes.⁷

¹*Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

²Minutes of the Meeting of the Vancouver Park Board, June 7th, 1935 [Vancouver City Archives: RG 7, Series A1, Volume 9].

³Frank Cosentino and Glynn Leyshon, *Olympic Gold: Canada's Winners in the Summer Games* (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, Limited, 1975), p. 95.

⁴Lappage, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

⁵Interview with Marjorie Milne, May 9th, 1977.

⁶Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 372.

⁷Dulles, *op. cit.*, p. 358.

Other popular sports of the '30's included judo, supported by the large Japanese population of B.C.,¹ and skiing, which experienced a boom during this period.² Professional and commercial sport did not suffer as much in British Columbia during the Depression as it did in other parts of Canada. Lacrosse was immensely popular, as indicated earlier in this section.³ Six-day bicycle racing, which flourished during the 1930's, was stimulated by the achievements of the Peden Brothers from Victoria.⁴ Boxing thrived, and Jimmy McLarnin, of Vancouver, won the world welterweight championship in both 1933 and 1934.⁵ Horse racing was popular, with Hastings and Lansdowne Parks in operation,⁶ while five-pin bowling was overtaking the ten-pin game in popularity.⁷

Although most sports operated under the aegis of local and provincial sports governing bodies, one organization, involved with a number of activities, was noteworthy for its contribution to amateur sport. This was the Greater Vancouver Sunday School Athletic Association, the programme of which included soccer for boys, and basketball, swimming, and track and field for both boys and girls.⁸ The municipal Church Tax Exemption By-Law of 1929 had a negative effect on this excellent programme,⁹ but it was still active enough in 1932 to be participating in

¹Lappage, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

²*Ibid.*, p. 25.

³*Supra*, pp. 47-48.

⁴Lappage, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁵Sid Wise and Douglas Fisher, *Canada's Sporting Heroes* (Don Mills, Ontario: General Publishing Company Limited, 1974), p. 151.

⁶Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 377.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 380.

⁸Interview with Marjorie Milne, May 9th, 1977.

⁹Vancouver, "A By-Law to Exempt Churches from Taxation", By-Law No. 1961, February 28th, 1929.

the provincial Sunday School League Basketball Championships.¹

It is apparent that sport did not really suffer during the Depression. In fact, it underwent a period of strong growth in many areas, both amateur and professional. Individuals with enforced leisure time often participated in sports to pass the hours away, or attended sports events for the very small admission fees charged.² Lappage noted a trend toward "getting into the game" rather than just watching,³ and there were enough activities to suit all ages and all pocket-books. However, most of these sports pastimes were accessible only to those with an income, no matter how small; certainly the indigent transients who were forced to subsist in the "jungles" of Vancouver would not feel that endless recreational opportunities were available to them. Also, women's participation in sport appeared to have decreased during the 1930's, according to a survey of sports coverage in a Vancouver newspaper; this was considered to be, in part, a manifestation of the general regression in women's rights during the Depression, as the pressures of the economy forced women back into the home.⁴

Nevertheless, many British Columbians were, in spite of serious economic conditions, able to participate in a wide range of sports, and this facet of recreation, on balance, actually advanced during the Depression.

¹Arnold, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

²Lappage, *op. cit.*, pp. 317-318.

³*Ibid.*, p. 318.

⁴Barbara Schrodtt, "Changes in the Status of Women's Sport in Canada as Reflected by Newspaper Coverage", unpublished paper, The University of Alberta, 1975, pp. 5, 40.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION BETWEEN THE WARS

The 1930's was a time of radical change in the physical education programmes in British Columbia schools, but most of the changes had their genesis in important developments of the 1920's. In order to properly examine physical education during the Depression, therefore, it is necessary to begin with the period immediately following World War I.

Education was still philosophically based upon the highly-formalized faculty theory of learning; students were strictly disciplined and the curriculum was subject-oriented. In physical education, the Strathcona Trust Fund controlled the content and form of most lessons. Although the stress on military drill was reduced, the emphasis was still paramilitary, and normal school teachers continued to be instructed by Army personnel, according to the *Syllabus of Physical Training for Schools, 1919*, issued by the Board of Education in Britain.¹ Gymnastics, in the form of calisthenics, supplemented the older cadet drill activities, and some B.C. schools offered a remedial exercise plan.² The influence of Ling gymnastics was strong in the earlier *Syllabus* of 1909, and this was retained in the 1919 revision.³

In British Columbia, inter-school athletic programmes were well-organized, and carried on traditions that had started in 1905. Rugby, field hockey, track and field, basketball, baseball, and lacrosse were keenly supported during the 1920's.⁴

¹Lappage, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

²Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

³Cosentino and Howell, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

⁴Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

The most important educational development of this decade was the introduction of proposals for fundamental revisions in all aspects of school curriculum and administration. The theories of progressive education, developed in the United States as an extension of the philosophy of pragmatism, began to have an impact in Canada, and their eventual acceptance produced revolutionary changes in Canadian education. Progressive education was essentially a reaction to the traditional form of schooling, with its emphasis on subjects, memorizing, and discipline. The new education stressed training for citizenship and democracy, and was more concerned with creative activities and practical subjects.¹ The curriculum was student-centered, with greater recognition of individual differences, and the dominant method of "learning-by-doing" was utilized in group projects or enterprises.² The first provincial revision was introduced in Saskatchewan in 1931, but British Columbia and Alberta were among the first provinces to institute large-scale changes. By 1936, these were completed, and served as models for the rest of Canada.³

Physical education was one of the new subjects given prominence, and was included in every major curriculum revision introduced in Canada during this period.⁴ This was not the old physical training of the Strathcona Trust traditions, but emphasized the importance of play,

¹Neatby, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12.

²Robert S. Patterson, "American Influence on Progressive Education in Canada", *Journal of Midwest History Education Association* (April, 1973), pp. 122-143.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 134-135.

⁴Peter Sandiford, "Curriculum Revision in Canada", *The School*, XXVI:6 (February, 1938), p. 476.

rhythmic activities, the character training potential of games, and the value of learning leisure time activities for later years.¹

In British Columbia, much of the impetus for revisions, including radical changes in the physical education programmes, came from the influential and forward-looking *Survey of the School System*, published in 1925.² The authors were J. H. Putnam and G. M. Weir,³ having been commissioned by the B.C. Department of Education to conduct an intensive study of the entire school system of the province. The *Survey* was "the most thorough examination of any school system in Canada",⁴ and the implementation of its recommendations had far-reaching effects. These included the establishment of junior high schools, and of the "platoon" system in elementary schools. Proposals for the upgrading of teacher training programmes and the revision of all school curricula were presented, according to the tenets of progressive education.

Putnam and Weir gave considerable attention to the subject of physical education, and recommended drastic changes in this area. They condemned the militaristic physical training then taught in the schools and strongly recommended that physical education emphasize informal activities, particularly games. Physical education was placed within the realm of health education, which was divided into two categories:

¹Lappage, *op. cit.*, pp. 226-227.

²J.H. Putnam and G.M. Weir, *Survey of the School System* (Victoria, B.C.: King's Printer, 1925).

³Dr. Weir, a professor of education at the University of B.C., was later appointed head of his department. This is the same George Weir who, in 1933, became Minister of Education in B.C., and who, one year later, inaugurated the Pro-Rec programme.

⁴C.E. Phillips, as quoted in R.S. Patterson, "Society and Education During the Wars and Their Interlude: 1914-1945", *Canadian Education: A History* (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall of Canada, Ltd., 1970), p. 371.

(a.) The medical examination and treatment of school children: and

(b.) Physical education proper, which has a twofold aim: To educate through organized play, leading to the development of character; and to develop the child physically, that he may become a healthy, as well as a moral citizen.¹

The authors of the *Survey* saw little value in the calisthenics and physical drill then taught in the schools. They felt that the mere fact that this was the system adopted by teacher training institutions "did not justify its continued use nor palliate its commonly recognized ineffectiveness" in attaining the aims of physical education.² The use of military officers was strongly denounced,³ and calisthenic exercises were relegated to a position of less importance.⁴ It was felt that physical education should be controlled by the Department of Education, not by "an external authority that decides upon a syllabus of exercises and details instructors, usually of little academic and no professional training" to train future teachers.⁵

In the place of physical drill, Putnam and Weir recommended a curriculum based upon the programmes of the best physical education schools in Great Britain and the United States.⁶ They strongly recommended that boys and girls be separated for physical education, with girls receiving their instruction from women teachers.⁷ Daily physical education opportunities were advocated for pupils in all grades, and organized games were to be included among these activities.⁸ The *Survey*

¹Putnam and Weir, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

²*Ibid.*, p. 225.

³*Ibid.*, p. 96.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 226.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 434.

urged that radical changes be made in the existing Normal School programme; it was too formal, and needed humanizing, through the introduction of more group games and organized activities. In addition, the qualifications of teachers to teach physical education required upgrading, and new special summer school courses were needed if this subject was to develop its full potential.¹ In essence, Putnam and Weir recommended an entirely new approach to physical education, one that would join with other school subjects in the education of the whole child.

The authors did recognize, however, that for British Columbia, these proposals were probably ten years ahead of their time,² and indeed it was almost ten years before their full implementation was attained. Changes in education are traditionally slow, and physical education was no exception to this. The Strathcona Trust Fund was deeply entrenched, and still received support from the many educational authorities who favoured a militaristic and formal approach to physical training. Also, the schools were staffed by tenured teachers whose methods were traditional and whose principles of education were not in harmony with the new ideas of progressivism. School inspectors continued to extol the benefits of formal drill, and the Canadian government still provided funds for schools adhering to the regulations of the Strathcona Trust Fund.³

Nevertheless, some important changes were effected, in the years following the publication of the *Survey*. The platoon system was instituted, in which elementary schools were departmentalized for specialized subjects such as physical education, art, and music; in schools

¹Putnam and Weir, *op. cit.*, pp. 229-230.

²*Ibid.*, p. 225.

³Hunt, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-42.

which adopted this system, students were taught physical education by a specialist, rather than by the classroom teacher, and the perennial problem of scheduling classes for a regular gymnasium or playground period was resolved.¹ When the Putnam-and-Weir recommendation for separate junior high schools was adopted in 1927, the *Programme of Studies* for these grades included three health and physical education classes per week.² The *New Programme of Studies*, presented in 1930 for high schools, also included provisions for physical education, with group games, folk dances, and other organized activities added to the formal exercises of the 1919 *Syllabus*.³ This new curriculum was also noteworthy for its inclusion of the first specific provisions for physical education for girls, with an emphasis on rhythmic exercises and games.⁴

The year 1933 was a milestone in the Canadian transition from militaristic physical training to modern physical education, for it was during this year that educators finally discarded the programme of the Strathcona Trust Fund, and accepted the concepts of play, group activities, and organized games. The 1933 *Syllabus of Physical Training* was published in Britain, and reflected the new Danish approach to gymnastics which had been popularized by Niels Bukh and his gymnastic-team tours of the 1920's.⁵ More importantly, organized games were given increased attention in this new revision, and with the *Syllabus* readily available across Canada, teachers had a new and valuable source of information and ideas for their physical education classes.

¹*Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

²Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 51-55.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

⁵Cosentino and Howell, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

The final battle against the Strathcona Trust Fund was fought in many quarters. The Canadian Physical Education Association was formed in this significant year of 1933, and the first President, Dr. A.S. Lamb, was strong in his denunciation of the Strathcona Trust Fund. He criticized its narrow, archaic point of view, and the emphasis on military drill found in most physical education programmes. In his opinion, the Fund had "done irreparable harm to Canada in promulgating such false and imbecillic notions regarding the place that physical education should play in education."¹

Another forceful opponent of military drill as physical education was Gordon Brandreth, who became Supervisor of Physical Education and Cadets for Vancouver schools in 1931.² He succeeded in convincing the Vancouver Board of School Trustees that it should discontinue the cadet programme, and in July, 1933, the Board voted to sever all connections with the Department of Militia and Defence.³ Other cities in Canada quickly followed suit, with Toronto abolishing its cadet training in September of that year.⁴

With a new, more humanized *Syllabus*, and without the pressures to comply with Strathcona Trust Fund regulations, physical education programmes were free to move in new and exciting directions, and by 1934, Brandreth could report that Vancouver was formulating a balanced

¹A.S. Lamb, as quoted in Lappage, "Selected Sports in Canadian Society", *op. cit.*, p. 224.

²Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

³*Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁴Cosentino and Howell, *op. cit.*, pp. 44. The Strathcona Trust Fund continued to provide other grants and awards for many years. The last provincial report submitted to the British Columbia Department of Education was for the school year 1971-72. *Public Schools Report, 1972-73.*

programme of activities.¹ In the elementary schools, twenty minutes each day were allotted to physical education, and the 1933 *Syllabus* served as the curriculum guide. A wide variety of small equipment was supplied for each school, and classes for grades five and six were separated into boys' and girls' sections. The experimental platoon-system schools employed men and women physical education specialists, and each class met daily for forty minutes. The three junior high schools of Vancouver were also staffed with full-time physical education specialists for boys and girls, and all students met for two periods of forty-five minutes each week. Four of the ten city senior high schools had specialists, while the remaining six had semi-specialists, who taught another subject in addition to physical education. Senior high school students received one forty-five minute physical education period per week. The secondary schools used the 1933 *Programme of Studies* of the Department of Education, and were supplied with light hand apparatus, and several pieces of large gymnastic equipment. Inter-school games and sports were organized for the elementary schools in soccer, basketball, volleyball, and baseball. The inter-high school athletic programme consisted of rugby, field hockey, basketball, and track and field. Teachers attended weekly sessions of a refresher course, and the Department of Education granted a Certificate in Physical Education to those teachers who met the requirements, usually gained by attendance at summer and winter courses in physical education. The emphasis in school programmes was on games and a more informal style of gymnastics, and Vancouver schools had indeed made considerable advances toward the objectives proposed by Putnam and

¹Gordon Brandreth, "A Brief Survey of Physical Education in the Schools of British Columbia", *Bulletin*, Canadian Physical Education Association, II:4 (November, 1934), pp. 2-5.

Weir in 1925.¹

Forty years later, in recalling his early period as Supervisor of Physical Education in Vancouver, Brandreth considered that his greatest achievement, along with the replacement of cadet programmes, was the institution of suitable programmes for girls, an area that had been almost completely ignored before his appointment. Folk dancing and games were introduced for girls' classes, and his encouragement of women physical education teachers was aided by the establishment of special courses and certificates offered by the Department of Education.²

Brandreth was also instrumental in staging mammoth physical education displays by Vancouver school students. The 1930's was a time of mass displays, and in 1935, two exhibitions of school physical education work were presented. The first was given in May, by secondary school students, and the second in June by elementary school boys and girls.³ The latter display was particularly significant, for its primary purpose was to persuade the voters of Vancouver that an imminent by-law to build gymnasiums in the city's elementary schools should be supported.⁴

The inability of school boards to construct necessary facilities was a serious deterrent to full implementation of the new physical education programmes. The drill programmes of the Strathcona Trust Fund could be presented anywhere in the school — in the classroom, the basement, or on the grounds — but games, dance and apparatus gymnastics required a gymnasium, and funds for this kind of facility were not

¹*Ibid.*

²Interview with Gordon Brandreth, former Supervisor of Physical Education for Vancouver School Board, Vancouver, B.C., May 24th, 1977.

³Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

⁴*Ibid.*

readily available during the Depression. Capital expenditures dropped markedly in the 1930's; in 1934-35, the allocation of funds for B.C. schools buildings was only thirteen per cent of the amount granted in 1929-30.¹ Ernest Lee, who was physical education instructor at the Provincial Normal School from 1938 to 1946, stated that the full impact of progressive physical education was not felt throughout B.C. until the late 1940's, when post-war gymnasium construction and university-trained teachers combined to produce conditions conducive to the realization of the new goals for physical education.²

Although a degree programme was not inaugurated at the University of British Columbia until 1946, its Department of Physical Education was established in 1936, with two instructors, one for men and one for women.³ This resulted from a 1934 request by students for instruction in free physical training on a voluntary basis, and classes were offered in a variety of games, gymnastics, and dance activities.⁴ The extramural and intramural programmes were also strongly supported by the student body during this period; basketball, rugby, soccer, football, swimming, field hockey, gymnastics, rowing, tennis, and track and field were among the more popular sports of the '30's.⁵

¹*Ibid.*

²Interview with Ernest Lee, former Pro-Rec Director, Pasadena, California, June 28th, 1976.

³Harry T. Logan, *Tuum Est: A History of the University of British Columbia* (Vancouver: The University of British Columbia, 1958), p. 132. The instructors were Maurice Van Vliet and Gertrude Moore.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 133-134.

SUPERVISED PLAYGROUNDS IN VANCOUVER

The playground movement in Canada arose during the early years of the twentieth century, in response to the crowded conditions in urban communities, and was stimulated by a similar movement in the United States.¹ Generally, the first supervised playgrounds in Canadian cities were promoted by Local Councils of Women,² or by service clubs such as Gyro, Rotary, or Kiwanis.³ In Vancouver, the Park Board built that city's first playground in 1912,⁴ and between 1922 and 1932, the Gyro Club was responsible for building and equipping seven more such areas.⁵ By 1934, the Vancouver Park Board was administering fourteen playgrounds, under the supervision of seventeen paid seasonal directors, and with the assistance of sixteen volunteers who received expense money.⁶ The first full-time supervisor of Vancouver playgrounds, Stuart Miller, was appointed in 1930.⁷ When he retired in 1932, he was succeeded by Ian Eisenhardt, who had been a playground director in the late 1920's. Eisenhardt remained as Supervisor until he resigned to become the first Director of Pro-Rec.⁸

The programme of the supervised playgrounds in the 1930's catered to boys and girls between the ages of five and seventeen. A

¹McFarland, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

²*Ibid.*

³Howard, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁵Marjorie Shorney, "Vancouver's Supervised Playgrounds," *Bulletin*, Canadian Physical Education Association, VI:5 (May, 1939), p. 1.

⁶Howard, *op. cit.*, p. 65, 70.

⁷McFarland, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁸Interview with Ian Eisenhardt, former Pro-Rec Director, Dorval, Quebec, December 12th, 1976.

variety of fundamental activities was offered during the summer months, and the playground programme was administered in two divisions. "All City Events" were scheduled for all playgrounds and were organized from the playground department; they consisted of track and field meets, swimming meets, folk dancing contests, sandbox contests, and a soap-box derby. "Local Activities", organized by the directors on individual playgrounds, included: folk dancing, high and low organized games, handicrafts, story hours, sandbox projects, swimming, tennis, hiking, gymnastics, and dramatics.¹

An important development of the Vancouver playgrounds in the early 1930's, one that was to hold particular significance for the creation of Pro-Rec, was the establishment of an experimental Winter Community Recreation programme in 1931. Three centres were organized in rented buildings in October of that year, for the purpose of continuing supervised activities for young people.² This first three-month experiment was very successful, and in January, 1932, six centres were opened in elementary schools throughout the city.³ The scheme was continued for two more years, and its popularity was demonstrated by the 226-name petition presented to the Park Board in 1932, when cutbacks threatened the programme.⁴ However, voluntary services were needed to complete the 1932-33 programme, and the financial situation became so serious that

¹Shorney, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

²Vancouver Park Board, "Annual Report of the Superintendent", unpublished report, Vancouver, B.C., 1931. [VCA: RG7, Series A2, Volume 43, File No. 3].

³Minutes of the Meeting of the Vancouver Park Board, January 14th, 1932, minute no. 1283 [VCA:RG 7, Series A1, Volume 8].

⁴Minutes of the Meeting of the Vancouver Park Board, April 13th, 1933, minute no. 1716 [VCA:RG7, Series A1, Volume 9].

Eisenhardt and one of the Park Board commissioners went to Victoria in October, 1934, to discuss the matter of provincial aid with Dr. G.M. Weir, Minister of Education. As a result of this meeting and other initiatives taken by Eisenhardt, Dr. Weir announced, on November 9th, the establishment of the Pro-Rec programme, and named Eisenhardt as its Director.¹ What had started as a small-scale extension of summer playground work became, almost overnight, a province-wide scheme of physical recreation. The story of the programme that grew from these modest beginnings is the subject of this study.

¹Minutes of the Meeting of the Vancouver Park Board, November 8th, 1934, minute no. 2116 [VCA:RG 7, Series A1, Volume 9].

CHAPTER III

THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF PRO-REC DURING THE DEPRESSION YEARS: 1934 TO 1939

On November 9th, 1934, Dr. George M. Weir, Minister of Education for British Columbia, announced the formation of a new branch of his Department, which was to be responsible for the establishment and operation of a programme of physical recreation for the unemployed young men in the province.¹ This programme had as its primary objective the mitigation of some of the effects of enforced idleness, particularly the demoralizing influence of large-scale unemployment.² The name of this new agency was the Recreational and Physical Education Branch of the Department of Education.

Low morale among Canadian youth had, for some time, been a cause of great concern to leaders examining the social and psychological effects of the Depression. In 1932, a report from the Prime Minister's Office on unemployment and relief in Western Canada included the following statement:

When, in addition, these young people find themselves thrust into continued enforced idleness, often underfed, without proper clothing, deprived of recreation and interest, there is a grave danger of a general lowering of morale and the breeding of an idleness and irresponsibility that will permanently affect Canada.³

¹*Daily Colonist* (Victoria), November 10th, 1934, p. 3.

²British Columbia, Executive Council, Order-in-Council No. 1346, October 30th, 1934 (see Appendix A for full text of Order-in-Council).

³Horn, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

In a 1939 report on unemployed youth, H.W. Weir stated that:

Enforced idleness at any age must exact its toll in human suffering, both mental and physical, yet how much greater must be the suffering in the case of the young man at the very threshold of his productive life. Probably nowhere else . . . are the effects of continued unemployment likely to be more disastrous.¹

The problems of unemployed youth were as serious in British Columbia as in any other part of Canada, and although general conditions had shown some improvement during 1934,² repercussions from the congregation of masses of unemployed in Vancouver were still to come, in the form of protest marches and sit-down strikes. The Liberal government of B.C. recognized the seriousness of the situation, and its 1933 election platform had included a demand for cooperation between governments at all levels, "to further the health, education and well-being of our people."³ The establishment of a programme to raise the morale of the unemployed was consistent with Premier Pattullo's belief that government must recognize and act upon its moral responsibility for the welfare of the masses of people.⁴ In a radio speech broadcast on the same day as Weir's announcement of the new recreation programme, Pattullo made specific reference to the plan, establishing it as part of his government's policy.⁵ As will be noted in later discussions concerning finances, the provincial government was able to operate its recreation programme for unemployed youth at a very low cost, and at no time did the financial

¹Richter, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

²Morley, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

³Ormsby, "Pattullo", in Horn, *op. cit.*, p. 622.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 621.

⁵*Daily Colonist*, November 10th, 1934, p. 3.

demands of Pro-Rec draw criticism.

THE CREATION AND INITIAL ORGANIZATION OF PRO-REC

In his public statement and in related correspondence with the Vancouver Park Board, Weir indicated that he had been considering the introduction of courses in recreational and physical education for some time,¹ and that the new programme was launched in response to many requests for organized recreation for young men.² Reports written in later years stated that service clubs, chambers of commerce, boards of trade, and concerned individuals had urged the provincial government to initiate some kind of recreation for the unemployed.³

Although direct evidence has not been found to support these references to previous requests for a recreation programme, there is no question about the influence of one other individual in the development of the scheme — Ian Eisenhardt, the man who was named by Weir to head Pro-Rec. Donald Creighton, the eminent Canadian historian, has stated that "history is the encounter of character and circumstance,"⁴ and the encounter between the character, Eisenhardt, and the circumstance, the

¹Letter to Vancouver Board of Park Commissioners from George M. Weir, Minister of Education, Victoria, recorded in Minutes of the Meeting of the Board, November 8th, 1934 [VAC:RG 7, Series A1, Volume 9, p. 196]. Weir had co-authored the 1925 *Survey of the School System*, which contained many strong recommendations for increased physical education in the school system (*supra*, pp. 54-56).

²*Daily Colonist*, November 10th, 1934, p. 3.

³Recreational and Physical Education Branch, Comprehensive Annual Report, (hereinafter referred to as "Comprehensive Report"), 1938-39, introductory statement, p. 2 (from private collection of Pro-Rec materials held by Ian Eisenhardt, Dorval, P.Q.; hereinafter referred to as "Eisenhardt Collection").

⁴Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, "Images of Canada", September 14th, 1977, "Heroic Beginnings", Donald Creighton, narrator.

PLATE II



Ian Eisenhardt, Director of Pro-Rec, 1934 to 1941
(Eisenhardt Collection)

conditions in B.C. during the Depression, resulted in a major development in the history of physical recreation in Canada — the establishment of Pro-Rec.

Eisenhardt, born in Denmark, had been Supervisor of Playgrounds in Vancouver since 1932,¹ after working for two summers as a playground director. He had also been active in a number of sports in Vancouver, notably soccer, fencing, and tennis.² On November 8th, 1934, the Vancouver Park Board was asked by Weir to grant Eisenhardt a five-month leave-of-absence, so that the Department of Education could avail itself of his services as a specialist and organizer in physical education.³

An examination of developments immediately prior to the announcement of the new programme reveals Eisenhardt's influence in the formulation of the plan, as well as his prior involvement with a related programme conducted by the Vancouver Park Board. The Winter Community Recreation programme of the Vancouver playgrounds had been established in 1931, and had operated successfully in five elementary schools in different parts of the city. During the winter months, when the playgrounds were not in operation, physical recreation classes were conducted from 4:00 to 9:00 p.m., usually on two days of the week in each school.⁴ Various age groups were accommodated, and the programme was particularly

¹Minutes of the Meeting of the Vancouver Board of Park Commissioners, February 11th, 1932, minute no. 1318 [VCA: RG 7, Series A1, Volume 8].

²Fuller details of Eisenhardt's career are provided under the "Leadership" section later in this chapter, *infra*, pp. 94-95.

³Letter to Vancouver Park Board from George M. Weir, *op. cit.* (See Appendix B for full text of letter.)

⁴Interview with Marjorie Milne, May 9th, 1977.

well-received by the parents of children who attended.¹ Unfortunately, general budget cutbacks forced the Playground Department to curtail its winter recreation services. Volunteers were needed to conduct the classes for the final portion of the 1932-33 season,² and in the fall of 1934, the Park Board decided to approach the provincial government for financial assistance in conducting the programme.³

This decision of the Park Board was precipitated by rapidly-moving events involving Eisenhardt and Weir during the month of October.⁴ On October 14th, Eisenhardt had been introduced to R.J. Cromie, publisher of the *Vancouver Sun*, a metropolitan daily newspaper. Cromie was interested in Eisenhardt's work in Vancouver, and asked him to meet again for a further discussion of his ideas about public recreation. The day after this second meeting with Cromie, Eisenhardt was introduced to Weir in Vancouver, and was invited to present his proposals in writing to the Minister of Education. Eisenhardt's letter to Weir, dated October 19th, referred to the Vancouver Winter Community Recreation programme and its curtailment from lack of funds.⁵ Eisenhardt also outlined his ideas for a programme of physical recreation that could be quickly and inexpensively arranged in four or five major centres in B.C. This letter was,

¹ Minutes of the Meeting of the Vancouver Board of Park Commissioners, March 23rd, 1933, minute no. 1704 [VCA:RG 7, Series A1, Volume 9].

² Minutes of the Meeting of the Vancouver Board of Park Commissioners, March 9th, 1933, minute no. 1692 [VCA:RG 7, Series A1, Volume 9].

³ Interview with Marjorie Milne, May 9th, 1977.

⁴ Ian Eisenhardt, Personal reports to George M. Weir, Minister of Education (hereinafter referred to as "Eisenhardt Personal Report"), November 24th and December 5th, 1934 (Eisenhardt Collection).

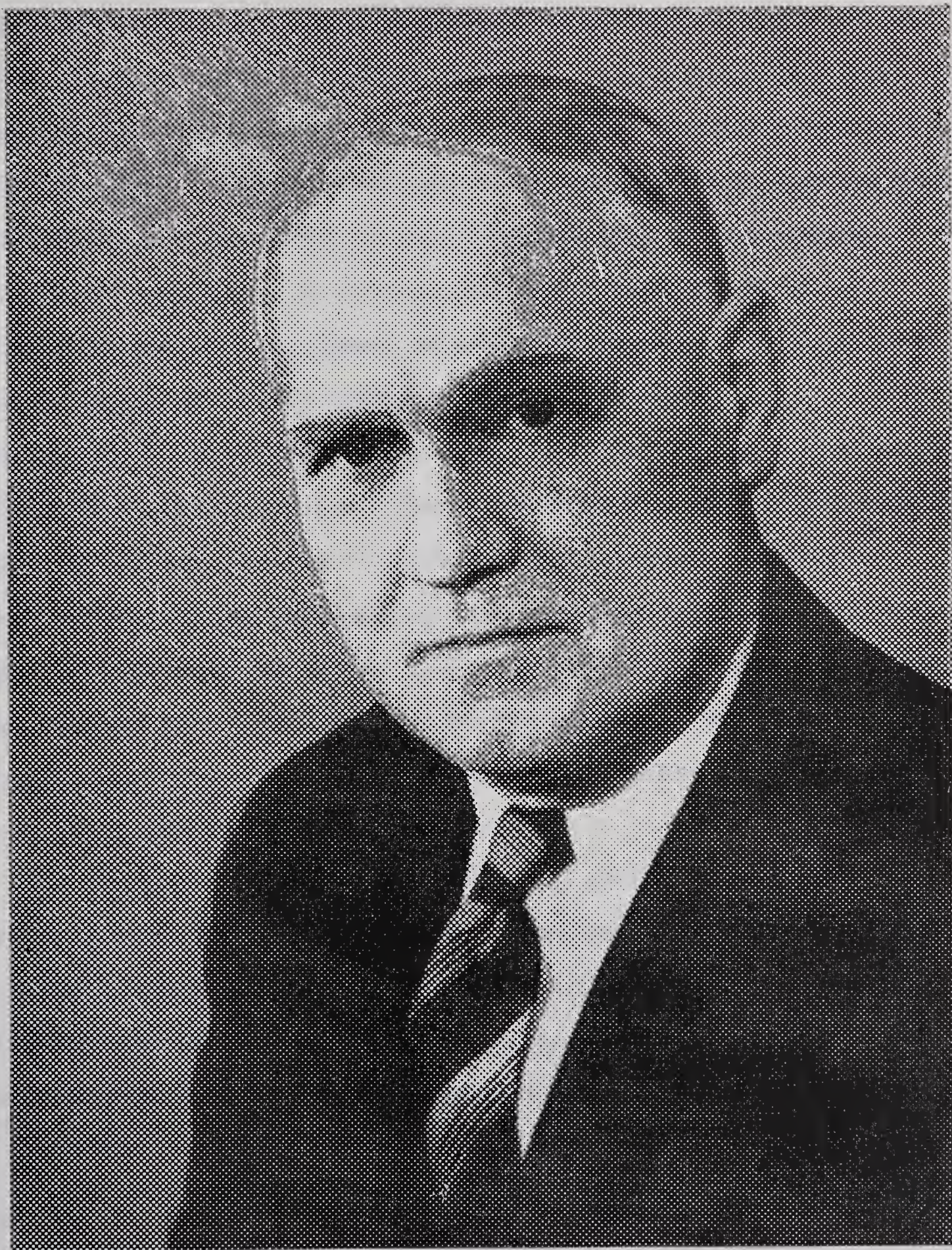
⁵ Eisenhardt Personal Report, December 5th, 1934 (see Appendix C for full text of letter).

essentially, a plan for a provincial scheme, not just a municipal one as had been conducted in Vancouver. In fact, Eisenhardt indicated that he did not favour the granting of funds to local educational groups for public recreation. His plan was inspired by government recreation projects in European countries, and called for the use of schools in the afternoons and evenings, with classes for different age groups and for both men and women. Instructors' fees and rentals would be the major costs, and classes would be oriented toward gymnastics.

As a result of this letter, Eisenhardt was invited to Victoria, the provincial capital, for further discussions with Weir. At this point, Eisenhardt informed the Vancouver Park Board of his communications with Weir, and the Board then decided that Eisenhardt would be accompanied to Victoria by his immediate superior, W.S. Rawlings, Park Superintendent, and by Rowe Holland, the Board Commissioner responsible for the Winter Community Recreation programme. This meeting took place on October 25th, at which time Rawlings and Holland attempted to persuade Weir to channel Vancouver funds through the Vancouver Park Board for use with the Winter Community Recreation programme. Weir had already formulated his plans for a provincial scheme of physical recreation, and he replied that any programme launched by the Department of Education would have to be provincial in nature, not municipal. The next day, Weir offered Eisenhardt the position of director of the new programme, and on October 30th, the Provincial Cabinet approved an Order-in-Council authorizing a special warrant of \$12,500, to provide for a plan of recreational and physical education that was "urgently and immediately required for the public good."¹

¹British Columbia, Legislative Assembly, Order-in-Council No. 1346, Victoria, B.C., October 30th, 1934.

PLATE III



George M. Weir, Minister of Education, British Columbia, 1933 to 1941,
1945 to 1947 (Recreation Week Programme, 1947)

At its next regular meeting, on November 8th, the Vancouver Park Board received a letter from Weir, stating his intention to establish a provincial physical recreation programme, and asking that Eisenhardt be given a leave-of-absence to direct this work. Weir's letter was presented in conjunction with Holland's report on the Victoria discussions of October 25th.¹ From the minutes of this meeting, it is apparent that the Park Board was operating on the assumption that the new programme would be a continuation of the Vancouver Winter Community Recreation activities, and later references in subsequent meetings still classified reports on the new Pro-Rec programme under "Winter Community Recreation".² The most revealing evidence of the Park Board interpretation of these developments was seen in the November 9th press statement issued by Holland, when the new programme was announced in Vancouver. In this statement, Holland said that the plan had originated with the Park Board, and that the Board would continue supervised physical training for youth over school age. He further stated that Eisenhardt would be given leave from his position as Supervisor of Playgrounds to "act in an advisory capacity to the government."³

In these early stages of development, the Vancouver Park Board obviously felt that its Winter Community Recreation programme had simply received a much-needed provincial grant, and that Eisenhardt, a Park Board employee, was merely working on an extension of that programme at the provincial level, for a five-month period; but Weir and Eisenhardt

¹Letter to Vancouver Park Board from George M. Weir, recorded November 8th, 1934, *op. cit.*

²Minutes of the Meeting of the Vancouver Park Board, November 22nd, 1934, minute no. 2123 [VAC:RG 7, Series A1, Volume 9].

³News-Herald (Vancouver), November 9th, 1934, p. 2.

quite clearly envisioned a new and different programme of public recreation, one that would be administered by a provincial agency, and free of control from municipal recreation boards. This concept was probably formulated at the first meeting between Eisenhardt and Weir, and was certainly clear in Eisenhardt's letter to Weir outlining his ideas. At that stage, the Park Board was not aware of these day-by-day developments, and would naturally assume that Eisenhardt and Weir had found a solution to the budget problems plaguing the Vancouver programme. In any event, the Park Board plans to provide winter recreation for both children and adults were soon discarded as the Pro-Rec programme quickly established itself in this important area of public recreation.¹

The speed with which Pro-Rec was conceived and inaugurated was matched by the promptness of its initial organization and operation. Less than four weeks had passed from the first meeting between Weir and Eisenhardt to the announcement of the new scheme. In an equally short time, Pro-Rec centres were opened and operating in Vancouver, New Westminster, and North Vancouver, and by December 22nd, 1934, these centres had enrolled approximately one thousand members.²

The first Pro-Rec centres were opened in Vancouver on November 16th and 17th, and were located in three elementary schools: Macdonald, Fleming and Renfrew.³ All three centres were located on the east side of the city, reflecting the unemployment trends of the times. An indication of the public response to Pro-Rec was seen in the registration of 115 young men on the first night, just one week after Weir's

¹Interview with Marjorie Milne, May 9th, 1977.

²*Victoria Daily Times*, December 22nd, 1934, p. 2.

³*Vancouver Sun*, November 16th, 1934, p. 13.

announcement.¹ During December, Eisenhardt hired instructors, purchased equipment, and established a head office in the Pacific Building, in Vancouver. He consulted with municipal officials in Vancouver, North Vancouver, Victoria, New Westminster, and Nanaimo, arranging for facilities and opening dates. By December 5th, five centres were organized and operating in Vancouver, with three more in New Westminster, and one in North Vancouver.² Victoria's opening was delayed until January 3rd,³ and the Nanaimo centre opened on February 5th.⁴

In each community, advisory councils were struck to assist Eisenhardt in his initial organization of centres. These committees were vital to the establishment of programmes, and in most cases, made a positive contribution.⁵ However, the Vancouver Advisory Committee presented some difficulties, because of an underlying conflict with Eisenhardt regarding final authority on decisions. This committee, known as the "Recreational Youth Centres Commission, Vancouver," was composed of appointees of the Vancouver School Board and the Vancouver Park Board. At their first meeting, the members gave Eisenhardt the impression that they were not satisfied with their advisory role, and at their second meeting, they stated that the committee was to operate on the understanding that "it shall have full authority to control the Vancouver policy

¹*Daily Province* (Vancouver), November 17th, 1934, p. 2.

²Eisenhardt Personal Report, December 5th, 1934.

³*Daily Colonist*, January 4th, 1935, p. 5.

⁴Eisenhardt Personal Report, February 21st, 1935.

⁵Eisenhardt Personal Reports, December 5th, 11th and 16th, 1934.

in Vancouver Youth Recreational Centres".¹ This was clearly contrary to Eisenhardt's intentions, and he stated, in his December 5th report to Weir, that if he were not given freedom to organize the Vancouver centres, little progress would be made.² Subsequently, Weir agreed to Eisenhardt's request that the Vancouver committee be circumvented, because its negative attitude would hamper efforts to establish the programme as quickly as possible.³ In contrast to the situation in Vancouver, Eisenhardt's experience with advisory committees in the four other municipalities was more satisfactory, and his reports to Weir during the formative weeks of the programme indicated that arrangements were made without too much difficulty.⁴

Originally, only unemployed young men were eligible for the new recreation classes, but the public response was so great that, within a few days of the original announcement, classes were declared open to all boys over sixteen years of age who were not attending high school.⁵ Shortly thereafter, registration for girls' classes was announced,⁶ and by December 11th, the age limit had been lowered to sixteen and over.⁷

By the end of March, 1935, with the first winter season completed, the new programme was well-established, with almost three thousand

¹Minutes of the Meeting of the Recreational Youth Centre Commission, Vancouver, November 20th, 1934, Eisenhardt Personal Report, December 5th, 1934.

²Eisenhardt Personal Report, December 5th, 1934.

³Interview with Ian Eisenhardt, December 12th, 1976.

⁴Eisenhardt Personal Reports, December, 1934 and January, 1935.

⁵*Daily Colonist*, November 17th, 1934, p. 6.

⁶*Vancouver Sun*, November 20th, 1934, p. 2.

⁷*Daily Colonist*, December 11th, 1934, p. 6.

members registered in nineteen centres, and over forty staff members providing instruction. Table 1 illustrates enrollment in each of the six communities served during the 1934-35 season. As would be expected with a programme designed to provide recreation for unemployed men, the proportion of women members was significantly lower. This was not indicative of the future, however, for the women's enrollment would soon be equal to, and eventually surpass, that for men.

TABLE 1
PRO-REC ENROLLMENT FOR 1934-35¹

Community	Men	Women	Total
Vancouver	777	243	1,020
New Westminster	213	97	310
Victoria	419	256	675
West Vancouver	120	130	250
North Vancouver	201	79	280
Nanaimo	165	---	165
Total	1,895	805	2,700

GENERAL DEVELOPMENTS

Introduction

This narrative of the Pro-Rec programme is presented in three

¹Daily Province, March 30th, 1935, magazine section, p. 5. In later reports, enrollment figures for this year were given as: men - 1903; women - 865; total - 2768 (Comprehensive Report, 1935-36, p. 62). This does not correspond to the totals given above in Table 1, and the later figure is probably the result of final and more comprehensive calculations made after the 1934-35 season was completed (*infra*, p. 79).

distinct time periods, selected according to the principle of periodization described by Berkhofer:

Whether the historian uses the term decade, generation, era, epoch, or period, he conceives of the number of years under consideration as possessing a certain unity so that the time span designated is not purely arbitrary.¹

The first period of Pro-Rec's history started with its inception in November, 1934, and ended with the outbreak of World War II, in September, 1939. The War profoundly affected most aspects of Canadian society, and the Pro-Rec programme was significantly altered by this important event. In retrospect, the first period was one in which the basic structure and function of the programme was established, and from which there would be little deviation during later periods. During this first stage, the basic form of the Pro-Rec programme of activities was set, and the nature of the centres themselves was formed. That segment of society which was represented by the membership remained essentially the same, and the source of instructors was entrenched by the time World War II started. In addition, the mass displays and the instructors' summer school, two important features of the total Pro-Rec programme, were inaugurated and refined during this first period, with a format that would change very little as years went by.

The years 1934 to 1939 were the best years for Pro-Rec, with respect to growth in membership. Table 2 lists the enrollment for winter and summer classes during this period. Not only was the actual rate of growth significantly rapid, but also the total enrollment of 26,831 for.

¹Robert J. Berkhofer, Jr., *A Behavioral Approach to Historical Analysis*, (New York: The Free Press, 1969), p. 226.

1938-39 was claimed to be the highest in the history of Pro-Rec.¹

TABLE 2
SEASONAL REGISTRATIONS: 1934 TO 1939²

Year	Summer	Winter	Total
1934 - 35	---	2,768	2,768
1935 - 36	985	4,535	5,520
1936 - 37	1,322	9,159	10,481
1937 - 38	1,489	20,004	21,493
1938 - 39	3,045	23,786	26,831

The number of centres operated by Pro-Rec expanded significantly, from nineteen in 1934-35 to 135 in 1938-39.³ Substantial growth in provincial funding was also a feature of this period, with a five-fold increase in grants by 1938-39.⁴ This was a time of strong support from newspapers and other publicity sources, and the annual mass displays served as important vehicles for the promotion of Pro-Rec in the metropolitan areas of Vancouver and Victoria. It was during this first important period that Pro-Rec's influence outside British Columbia was

¹See Appendix D for full details for all years. For a later revision of this claim, see *infra*, p. 192, fn. no. 2).

²British Columbia, Department of Education, *Annual Report of the Public Schools* (hereinafter referred to as *Public Schools Report*), 1934-35 to 1938-39; see also *Comprehensive Reports*, 1935-36, 1936-37, 1938-39; B.C. newspapers.

³See Appendix D for full details.

⁴See Appendix E for full details of all grants.

most strongly felt, in the establishment of similar programmes in other western provinces and in the acceptance of physical recreation as a provincial responsibility. Nevertheless, reaction to Pro-Rec was not always positive, and problems developed over the years, many of which led to the eventual termination of the programme in 1953. These problems surfaced at various times during the nineteen-year span of Pro-Rec, but many had their origins in this initial period of growth and development. In summary, the first five years of Pro-Rec represents the most important period in the history of Pro-Rec, and each of the features mentioned above will be given detailed treatment in this chapter.

Centres

A Pro-Rec "centre" was simply the physical location for regularly-scheduled Pro-Rec activities. Most centres were located in school gymnasias or church and community halls; others were scheduled at swimming pools, drill halls, and Y.M.C.A.'s.¹ At the majority of centres, the basic Pro-Rec programme of exercises, apparatus gymnastics, sports and dance was offered, but some centres were organized around a specific sports activity such as swimming.² Men's and women's centres were conducted separately, and women's classes were led by women instructors, wherever possible.³ Classes varied in length, from one to three hours, and the majority were conducted for at least two hours.⁴ Classes were

¹British Columbia, Recreational and Physical Education Branch, *The Gymnast*, II:1 (November, 1936), p. 4.

²*Public Schools Report*, 1934-1935, p. 75.

³Canadian Physical Education Association, *Bulletin*, VI:4 (March, 1939), p. 3.

⁴*Gymnast*, III:1 (October, 1937), p. 4.

generally offered twice per week, but a significant number of centres operated four times weekly.¹ The most common time for classes was evenings, although a small percentage were held in the afternoons. The 1936-37 schedule included the following typical class times:

Templeton School (Vancouver)	- Women: Wed & Fri, 7:30 to 10:30
	Men: Tues & Thurs, 7:30 to 10:30
Victoria High School	- Women: Mon, 7:30 to 9:30
	Men: Thurs, 7:30 to 9:30
Prince Rupert	- Men & Women: all weekdays
Nanaimo	- Women: Mon & Wed, 2:30 to 5:30
	Men: Mon & Wed, 7:30 to 10:30

Winter centres usually opened in October, and closed in March,² although a few non-metropolitan centres continued through to April or May.³ No fees were charged, and the Branch provided facilities, equipment, and instructors for all classes.⁴

The opening of each new season was preceded by extensive publicity in daily newspapers. Of the major communities, Vancouver merely listed locations of centres and opening dates for registration of members. Victoria, on the other hand, regularly staged an official opening ceremony at the Crystal Gardens in that city, with registration, a short demonstration of centre activities by instructors, and speeches by Pro-Rec

¹Comprehensive Report, 1936-37, pp. 77-78. See Appendix F for location of centres, and the days of the week for which classes were scheduled, for 1936-37. This Appendix also gives an indication of the facilities that were used at that time. The 1936-37 programme is representative of winter schedules offered each year by Pro-Rec.

²*Ibid.*, p. 106.

³*Public Schools Report*, 1938-39, p. 81.

⁴*Vancouver Sun*, November 16, 1934, p. 13.

officials and other dignitaries.¹

After the first year, during which Eisenhardt established nineteen centres in five major regions in B.C., the increase in numbers of centres was rapid, as is shown in Table 3. Part of the reason for this sharp growth after the second year of the programme was the generous increase in government appropriations. It is probable that this was both the cause and the effect of more requests for centres from all parts of the province. At the same time, Eisenhardt was actively promoting Pro-Rec throughout B.C., and made trips to many communities in his first two years as Director. During the 1934-35 winter season, he confined his travels to points on Vancouver Island, and to Chilliwack in the Fraser Valley and Prince Rupert on the north coast.² Later, as soon as the continuation of Pro-Rec was assured, and plans for the second season underway, he took extended trips to more distant parts of the province. In September and October, 1935, he travelled throughout Northern B.C., visiting Prince Rupert, Smithers, Prince George, and Kamloops. In these cities, he met with school officials and representatives of service clubs, to discuss plans for Pro-Rec centres. In Smithers and Prince George, public meetings were held, to hear him discuss the Pro-Rec programme, and at the conclusion of these meetings, local committees were chosen to implement plans for the establishment of Pro-Rec centres as soon as possible.³ Another tour, made in June, 1936, took Eisenhardt to the Okanagan Valley. He visited Ashcroft, Kamloops, Armstrong, Vernon, Kelowna, West

¹*Daily Colonist*, October 2nd, 1937, p. 11.

²Eisenhardt Personal Reports, 1934 and 1935.

³Eisenhardt Personal Report, October 22nd, 1935.

Summerland, Penticton, and Princeton. As with the Northern B.C. tour, he consulted with school principals and inspectors, examined potential locations for Pro-Rec centres, and addressed interested groups.¹ As a result of these two tours, nine centres were opened for the 1936-37 season, and seven more in 1937-38.²

TABLE 3

NUMBERS OF PRO-REC CENTRES: 1934-35 TO 1938-39³

Year	Summer Centres	Winter Centres	Total
1934-35	--	19	19
1935-36	14 (1935)	22	36
1936-37	20 (1936)	57	77
1937-38	22 (1937)	92	114
1938-39	39 (1938)	135	174

An extensive survey was conducted, during 1936 and 1937, to determine the need for and the feasibility of establishing Pro-Rec centres in communities throughout B.C. This survey took the form of a questionnaire, and provided information about: organizations that could sponsor a centre; the number of adults likely to avail themselves of the programme offered at a Pro-Rec centre; the nature of existing facilities; financial commitment by the community or organization; availability of qualified

¹Letter to George M. Weir from Ian Eisenhardt, Vancouver, July 28th, 1936 [Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Victoria: 8.9.4-8.9.5g, files A-F, folder D].

²Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, pp. 1-68.

³See Appendix D.

instructors; and other leisure-time activities organized for the community.¹ This kind of information doubtless aided in the development of useful guidelines for decisions about new centres.

As civic leaders and service clubs became more aware of this free government programme, many requests for centres were received by the Pro-Rec head office, as well as by the Minister of Education, Dr. Weir. In August, 1937, it was announced that more than one hundred coastal and interior points wanted Pro-Rec centres.² and one year later, Eisenhardt stated that, although ninety-two centres had been established during the 1937-38 season, there were still over two hundred unfilled requests from various cities and districts; he noted that a ten-fold increase in appropriations would be needed if Pro-Rec were to establish a centre in every community that requested one.³

It was the policy of the Branch to open a new centre or centres in only those districts which could ensure a strong response from their adult population. Subject to availability of funds from the government appropriation, the Branch would pay the salary of an instructor and supply basic gymnasium equipment. The community was expected to provide a suitable hall, including light, heat and janitor services, free of charge and for an average of twice each week. The community was also asked to provide additional equipment, and, if necessary, to financially assist local instructors attending the annual summer course conducted by the

¹Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Survey of Recreational Needs and Facilities in B.C. Communities" (mimeographed), 1936 [PABC:8.9.4-8.9.5g].

²*Daily Province*, August 11th, 1937, p. 9.

³Ian Eisenhardt, text of address to students at the Pro-Rec Summer School, Vancouver, August 12th, 1938, p. 3 (Eisenhardt Collection).

Branch in Vancouver.¹

Even in those instances where all of the requirements were met by a community, it might still not be practical to provide an instructor for two or three classes per week in an isolated district. An alternative solution was to establish a sufficient number of centres in different communities situated within reasonably close proximity to one another, so that one instructor could be hired on a full-time basis for the entire area. The other alternative involved the appointment of a part-time instructor from the community, employed on a sessional basis.² Both of these methods were common practice during this first phase of Pro-Rec's development.

New centres were requested by a variety of groups and individuals. Parent-Teacher Associations, Boards of Trade, and Rotary clubs petitioned the Branch for centres,³ as did ratepayers' associations, school boards, community-hall associations, Kinsmen clubs, athletic associations, and informal groups of citizens.⁴ Although most requests for new centres could not be filled because of insufficient funds, the number of winter-programme centres did increase significantly, rising from nineteen in the first season to 135 in 1938-39.⁵ There were, apparently, some exceptions made to the policy regarding new centres. Prince Rupert's

¹British Columbia, Department of Education, Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Instructors' Handbook - 1938-39" (mimeographed), pp. 3-4. (Eisenhardt Collection.)

²*Ibid.*, p. 3.

³*News-Herald*, June 30th, 1939, p. 14.

⁴Comprehensive Report, 1936-37, pp. 37-51.

⁵See Table III, *supra*, p. 83.

centre was opened late in the 1936-37 season, following direct intervention by the Minister of Education. In January, 1937, Weir informed Eisenhardt that a centre was to be opened in that northern B.C. city, despite the fact that the allocations for that year did not allow for this. Weir authorized the Branch to exceed its budget by \$600, for the purpose of establishing this new centre.¹ The community response to this centre was very strong, and it proved to be a popular programme for many years to come.

One of the most important contributions made by Pro-Rec was the provision of recreation opportunities in rural areas where little or no winter programmes had existed previously.² Table 4 lists the distribution of 1937-38 centres throughout the province. The last two groups represent those centres which could be properly labelled "rural", inasmuch as they were located in small communities, villages, and municipal districts, as opposed to cities or towns. These rural centres comprised approximately forty per cent of the total of Pro-Rec centres in B.C. Also, many of the centres in cities such as Kamloops, Chilliwack and Vernon were able to serve neighbouring rural areas. Registration and attendance figures demonstrated that Pro-Rec was greatly appreciated in the small cities and in rural districts.³

The instructor in each centre was expected to organize a Centre Committee of four, elected from amongst the members of that centre. The recommended duties of the Committee were:

- a) to arrange socials;

¹Eisenhardt Personal Report, January 15th, 1936.

²Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, introductory letter, p. 4.

³Comprehensive Report, 1935-36, p. 14.

- b) to function as a membership committee;
- c) to function as a tribunal to deal with matters of interest to the Centre;
- d) to assist the instructor in keeping "law and order" in and around the Centre;
- e) to deal with individual misconduct.

It was suggested that each group of four function as the Centre Committee for one month only, thus allowing a large number of members to participate in this aspect of Pro-Rec organization.¹

TABLE 4
CENTRES IN URBAN AND RURAL LOCATIONS: 1937-38²

Location	Number of Centres
Vancouver	32
Victoria	5
Other Cities	19
District Municipalities	27
Rural School Districts	9
Total	92

It would be dangerous to generalize about the Pro-Rec centres established throughout the province during these first five years of the programme's existence. For instance, although most centres remained in operation,³ a number did close after one or two seasons, for a wide

¹ British Columbia, Department of Education, Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Information and Duties of Instructors" (mimeographed), October 29th, 1936, p. 2 [PABC: 9.8.4 - 8.9.5g, Box 1-26, folder Van.1-C].

² *Public Schools Report*, 1937-38, p. 79.

³ *Comprehensive Report*, 1938-39, pp. 41-68.

variety of reasons. The following excerpts, concerning centres which were closed, are taken from the Comprehensive Annual Reports for 1935-36 and 1936-37, and indicate the range and complexity of problems that were encountered by the Branch, in its attempts to promote a province-wide programme of physical recreation.

Ashcroft [a rural community in the Thompson River area]
A Centre was established here on the request of the Ashcroft Athletic Association. The location, however, proved very inadequate and during the severe winter the classes collapsed entirely. On the suggestion of our instructor . . . the Centre was discontinued in early February.¹

King George [a Vancouver high school]
Although it is the only gymnasium in the West End, where over 30,000 people are residing, I [Eisenhardt] am very disappointed in the low registration. When you take into consideration the very inadequate facilities, you cannot blame our members for not attending as well as they should. . . . The gymnasium defeats the whole purpose of physical education and should not be used as a gymnasium as it discourages, rather than encourages, people from taking gymnastics and recreation.²

Open Air Centre [Vancouver]
It closed before the end of the usual season this year due to the fact that the members became discouraged when they heard that the "club" could not continue beyond the season as they had wished, because the building was being taken over by another Branch of the Department of Education.³

Vanderhoof [Northern B.C.]
Mr. _____ was appointed instructor in charge of this Centre. . . . The first few sessions that were held were successful and everything went smoothly until the unfortunate death of Mr. _____'s father. He saw no alternative but to return home to care for the ranch. As there was no one capable of taking over this Centre, we had to close it.⁴

¹Comprehensive Report, 1936-37, p. 22.

²Comprehensive Report, 1935-36, p. 18.

³Comprehensive Report, 1936-37, pp. 13-14.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 23.

Membership

Although Weir and Eisenhardt originally conceived of Pro-Rec as a programme of physical recreation for unemployed youth, it was quickly expanded to include the entire population aged sixteen and over. Women joined centres in large numbers, and by 1935-36, their registration was higher than that for men; this condition did not change throughout Pro-Rec's history.¹

The individuals who joined Pro-Rec came from almost all walks of life, and were of all ages, but the majority consisted of housewives, unemployed youth, young girls, and older businessmen.² The typical male member was in his teens or early twenties, and physically active, while the typical woman was somewhat older, more sedentary, and usually a housewife.³ Generally, the members could not afford to spend money on their leisure time pursuits, and took advantage of the free programme offered by the government;⁴ it gave the men something enjoyable to do in their spare time,⁵ and it gave the women a welcome opportunity to escape from household chores.⁶ In 1938-39, approximately one-third of the membership was classified as unemployed.⁷

¹ See Appendix D.

² Interviews with Hilda Keatley, former Pro-Rec Chief Instructress, Vancouver, B.C. May 23rd, 1977, and with R.J. Phillips, former Pro-Rec Acting Director, Vancouver, B.C., May 19th, 1977.

³ Interview with R.J. Phillips, May 19th, 1977.

⁴ *Daily Province*, February 1st, 1936, magazine section, p. 5.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Interview with Hilda Keatley, February 21st, 1976.

⁷ A.P. Woollacott, "B.C. Gymnastic Movement May Sweep All Canada", *Saturday Night*, August 26th, 1939, supplement, p. 20.

Although most centres were open to any citizen who wished to join, some centres catered to special member groups. This feature was particularly noticeable in the Vancouver area. Langara and Marpole Parent-Teacher Associations sponsored women's Pro-Rec classes for their members.¹ The nurses of St. Paul's Hospital had their own regular classes at St. Andrew's-Wesley Church.² Special remedial classes for women were started in the 1937-38 season, offering less strenuous programmes for older women and for women who had had very little experience with physical fitness activities.³ These classes were re-named "Keep Fit" in 1938,⁴ when sixteen such centres were in operation.⁵ Businessmen's classes of the Keep Fit type were also instituted for older men.⁶ A special "open-air" centre was established for boys in one Vancouver neighbourhood, and the boys themselves worked at the conversion of part of an old school building, making it suitable for gymnastics classes;⁷ this centre was atypical in that it served a specific local group, and was similar to boys' clubs conducted by social service agencies. A centre was also opened at the Provincial Boys' Industrial School of Coquitlam.⁸

¹ *Gymnast*, II:3 (January, 1937), p. 1; see also *Gymnast*, IV:5 (November, 1938), p. 8.

² *Gymnast*, III:3 (December, 1937), p. 6.

³ *Vancouver Sun*, October 1st, 1937, p. 21.

⁴ *Vancouver Sun*, September 13th, 1938, p. 6.

⁵ *Comprehensive Report*, 1938-39, pp. 66-68.

⁶ *Daily Province*, September 29th, 1938, p. 14.

⁷ *Comprehensive Report*, 1935-36, pp. 20-21.

⁸ Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Pro-Rec Bulletin," October 23rd, 1938, p. 4 (from private collection of Pro-Rec materials held by Hilda Keatley, hereinafter referred to as "Keatley Collection").

Finally, a centre catering to a very special group operated from 1935 onwards at the Vancouver Deaf and Blind School; dance and basketball were particularly popular activities there.¹

Members were expected to wear the regulation uniform for Pro-Rec classes, if they could afford this, and were encouraged to do so by their instructors. The uniform for men, in their regular classes, was dark shorts and gym shoes, with no shirt; those participating in displays were expected to wear dark blue shorts and white shoes.² Women wore shorts and a blouse at first, but in 1936, a blue "romper" was introduced, to be worn with a blouse; it sold for two dollars.³ The following year, this was replaced by a light-blue one-piece gymnastics suit,⁴ which became widely-known as the women's Pro-Rec uniform. In order to keep members' expenses to a minimum, a special soft shoe was designed for women. Based on a simple pattern made available to members, it could easily be constructed from canvas or heavy cotton, and elastic; the felt from an old hat was used for the sole.⁵ During the second season, a membership crest was produced. Embroidered with the British Columbia coat of arms, and the letters "PRC" (for "Provincial Recreation Centres"), it was sold to members for the nominal cost of fifteen cents.⁶ These uniforms and crests no doubt contributed to the members' feeling of

¹*Gymnast*, V2 (February-March, 1939), p. 19.

²"Instructors' Handbook - 1938-39", *op. cit.*, p. 9.

³*Public Schools Report*, 1936-37, pp. 79-80.

⁴*Gymnast*, III:1 (October, 1937), p. 6.

⁵Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Shoes" (mimeographed, n.d.) (Keatley Collection).

⁶*Public Schools Report*, 1935-36, p. 117.

belonging to a specific recreation or sports organization, especially as a survey revealed that ninety-nine per cent of the Pro-Rec membership had never belonged to a sports group before.¹

References have been made to the large number of women who joined Pro-Rec centres, and to the fact that, after the first season, women's registration exceeded men's in every year that Pro-Rec offered classes. Table 5 demonstrates that, during the 1930's, the enrollment for men was quintupled, while that for women increased twenty-fold. This dramatic

TABLE 5
REGISTRATIONS FOR MEN AND WOMEN: 1934-39²

Year	Men	Women	Total
1934-35	1,903	865	2,768
1935-36	2,729	2,791	5,520
1936-37	4,690	5,791	10,481
1937-38	7,834	13,659	21,493
1938-39	9,827	17,004	26,831

increase was partially reflected in the number of women's classes scheduled in the Vancouver area. During 1936-37, sixteen men's classes were in operation, and thirteen women's.³ However, by 1938-39 this ratio was reversed, with twenty-one classes for women, as opposed to fifteen for

¹Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, introductory letter, p. 1.

²See Appendix D.

³*Gymnast*, II:1 (November, 1936), p. 4.

men.¹ Mid-day participation for mothers of young children presented difficulties, and one centre arranged for a *crèche*, where small children could be supervised while their mothers took part in the classes.² When the mass displays were staged in Vancouver each year, the impression given was that physical training appealed more to women than to men, for the proportion of participants in the display programme favoured women, two to one.³ This strong support of Pro-Rec by women did not escape the notice of administrators and newspaper reporters,⁴ and was labelled, by one reporter, a "new cult" for women.⁵ In another newspaper article, it was noted that Pro-Rec was the first programme in B.C. which accorded girls and women the same status as boys and men.⁶

Another important segment of the membership was that known as "juniors", that is, anyone under the age of sixteen years. By 1935-36, juniors formed a recognized group in some centres, with regularly-scheduled classes.⁷ The range in age for this group varied; in Prince Rupert, juniors were fourteen to sixteen,⁸ while in a Vancouver centre, two classes were organized, one for those under age nine, and another for those nine and over.⁹ Juniors were registered separately, and in some

¹*Gymnast*, (October, 1938), p. 9.

²*Gymnast*, II:2 (December, 1936), p. 4.

³Woollacott, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁴*Daily Province*, March 26th, 1938, magazine section, p. 10; see also *Vancouver Sun*, March 31st, 1938, p. 1.

⁵*Daily Province*, October 16th, 1937, magazine section, p. 3.

⁶*Daily Province*, March 13th, 1937, magazine section, p. 1.

⁷Comprehensive Report, 1935-36, p. 17.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁹*Gymnast*, II:2 (December, 1936), p. 3.

districts, notably Vancouver, no student attending day school was permitted to join Pro-Rec.¹ The Vancouver School Board was particularly adamant about this policy, and it was necessary for Pro-Rec instructors to determine if any junior members were, indeed, attending school.² Under the federal-provincial agreements which began in 1937-38, juniors were not included, and these members were registered separately in registration reports.³ By 1938-39, junior membership totalled 2,681, approximately one-tenth of the total membership.⁴

LEADERSHIP

Leadership of the Pro-Rec programme came from two sources: directly, from the administrative staff; and indirectly, from members of the provincial legislature. The influence of politicians, and the effects of political pressure, will be discussed in a later chapter. This section will be concerned with the administrators of Pro-Rec, and particularly with its Director, Ian Eisenhardt.⁵

Eisenhardt was born in Denmark in 1906, and attended school in Copenhagen. He graduated with a baccalaureate in languages from the University of Rennes in France in 1924.⁶ Between 1924 and 1928, when

¹ "Information and Duties of Instructors", October 29th, 1936, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

² Letter to H.N. MacCorkindale, Superintendent of Schools, Vancouver, from Ian Eisenhardt, Vancouver, November 3rd, 1936 [PABC: 8.9.4-8.9.5g, Box 1-26].

³ *Public Schools Report*, 1937-38, p. 80.

⁴ *Public Schools Report*, 1938-39, p. 90.

⁵ A comprehensive analysis of Eisenhardt's contribution to Pro-Rec is included in Chapter 6.

⁶ Interview with Ian Eisenhardt, *op. cit.*

he first came to Vancouver, Eisenhardt played soccer in France, developed his fencing skills, and studied gymnastics in Copenhagen. His trip to Vancouver was the outcome of a scholarship won in an essay contest, on the topic of the most practical method for a young man to gain success in a foreign country. In his winning essay, Eisenhardt elaborated on his ideas about physical culture, and stated that success would result if the young man had a healthy body, and a pleasing personality.¹ After his arrival in Vancouver in 1928, Eisenhardt spent three years at various jobs, including two summers as a playground director for the Vancouver Park Board. He also played first-division soccer, coached fencing at the University of British Columbia, and was active in local tennis tournaments.² In 1931, he returned to Denmark, but the following year was invited back to Vancouver, to assume the position of Supervisor of Playgrounds.³ When Pro-Rec was inaugurated in 1934, he was initially given leave-of-absence from his playgrounds position; in June, 1935, Eisenhardt submitted his full resignation to the Vancouver Park Board.⁴

To the position of Director of the Pro-Rec Branch, Eisenhardt brought his particular qualities of enthusiasm and salesmanship. He was described in a 1937 newspaper article, as a "very persistent young

¹ *Vancouver Sun*, December 17th, 1934, p. 6.

² *Ibid.*

³ Minutes of the Meeting of the Vancouver Board of Park Commissioners, February 11th, 1932, minute no. 1318 [VCA: RG7, Series A1, Volume 8].

⁴ Minutes of the Meeting of the Vancouver Board of Park Commissioners, June 13th, 1935, minute no. 2310 [VCA: RG7, Series A1, Volume 9].

fanatic",¹ and this appears to be a very apt description of his approach to this position. Individuals who worked for him have variously stated that he possessed: charm, an engaging personality, salesmanship qualities; that he was an innovator, good at public relations, a hard worker, aggressive, adept at organizing others and delegating authority.² He also appears to have held the naive belief that everyone would support all of his proposals; he was impatient with bureaucratic delays and obstacles, and was inclined, on occasion, to publicly present a strong opinion that produced controversy. The general impression gained is one of an idealistic, determined, and ambitious young man with a strong sense of mission, possessing the abilities to conceive a programme, convince the proper authorities of its worth, and produce an organization that succeeded. It is also probable that he did not foresee the development of Pro-Rec and related federal programmes in anything other than the vaguest of forms, when he first broached the idea to Weir in 1934.

During the first few years of the Pro-Rec programme, Eisenhardt became very well known, not only in Vancouver, but also throughout the province. His calendar included numerous speeches to a wide range of organizations, appearances at special events and displays, and frequent radio addresses.³ In 1936-37, for example, he gave seventeen speeches to groups all over the province, made three radio broadcasts, attended

¹*Daily Province*, March 13th, 1937, magazine section, p. 1.

²Interviews with: Hilda Keatley, May 23rd, 1977; R.J. Phillips, May 10th, 1977; Phyllis Sanderson, former Pro-Rec instructress, May 24th, 1977, Vancouver, B.C.

³Comprehensive Reports, 1935-37, pp. 1-7; 1936-37, pp. 90-106; 1938-39, pp. 172-184.

twelve Pro-Rec displays, and represented Pro-Rec at thirteen special events for other organizations.¹ His salesmanship qualities were demonstrated in this personal promotion of the Pro-Rec programme. His athletic abilities were not fully employed in the Pro-Rec programme, for he was not a regular instructor at any one centre; but he did promote one of his favourite sports, fencing, by giving demonstrations from time to time.²

Eisenhardt believed that a high level of physical fitness was essential for the full development of the individual. He felt that the government should play a paternal role in providing the right kinds of activities, in a fairly disciplined setting, so as to produce better and healthier citizens for the greater good of the nation. The following excerpts from his reports, speeches, and articles illustrate this philosophy:

The classes teach the young people of British Columbia how to keep fit, how to keep healthy, how to get the most from life, and how to serve best. A full existence depends upon a healthy, active mind Unless wholesome and healthy activities are provided, we have only ourselves to blame if the young people waste their time and form bad habits through undesirable associations.³

Under a democratic Government a scheme of physical education cannot be effective until every child and adult has equality of access to all that is meant by "physical education" and has an equal opportunity to become a healthy citizen and to feel the glow of fitness.⁴

¹ Comprehensive Report, 1936-37, pp. 90-106.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 101, 103.

³ *Public Schools Report*, 1934-35, p. 75.

⁴ *Public Schools Report*, 1937-38, p. 76.

It is a government responsibility to look after the welfare of its people and to provide for them activities which will form good habits, teach them fair play and build good citizens.¹

An examination of Eisenhardt's reports, public statements, and correspondence reveals his firm commitment to the values of improved physical fitness for all citizens, and he seems never to have deviated from his beliefs in the worth of public recreation programmes in general, and Pro-Rec in particular.

Eisenhardt should be given most of the credit for Pro-Rec. He persuaded Weir to support his plan, then worked diligently to make it a popular success. In 1939, the Canadian Physical Education Association *Bulletin*, in an article urging its members to attend the annual convention in Vancouver, stated that delegates would have an opportunity to observe the progressive Pro-Rec programme; and to see how "the personality, persistence and ability of one man has [sic] been able to do what we consider in the east to be — a dream come true."²

Jerry Mathisen, chief instructor for the men's programme, was also an important influence in Pro-Rec, primarily because he was with the programme throughout its entire history. Mathisen was the only person to hold this distinction. He was born in Norway, and worked in Winnipeg before going to Vancouver. Prior to the establishment of Pro-Rec, he had been a Y.M.C.A. instructor and worked on the Vancouver playgrounds.

¹ Ian Eisenhardt, text of address to Parent-Teachers Association, Vancouver, B.C., April 7th, 1935, p. 5 (Eisenhardt Collection).

² Canadian Physical Education Association, *Bulletin*, VI:4 (March, 1939), p. 3.

³ *Gymnast*, I:1 (November 4th, 1935), p. 2.

A former member of the Norwegian gymnastics team, he was well-known for his excellence as a gymnastics performer.

During the formative years, Mathisen wrote many articles for the Pro-Rec magazine, *The Gymnast*, gave radio addresses, and was chief instructor for men at the Pro-Rec summer school for instructors. He was thus able to make his views known about the worth of exercise and the form that it should take. The following quotation from his 1935-36 report represents his beliefs:

It is not sufficient to have the boys and girls play games and do a few dance steps. Good stretching exercises for the flexibility of joints and contraction exercises in various apparatus work must be carried out to build strength and health and in as much [sic] as it is a natural desire in any normal child to climb and to perform stunts, proper facilities and efficient instruction should be made available.¹

Mathisen was a strong supporter of gymnastics competitions, and organized the Canadian Gymnastics Championships held in Vancouver in 1939.² His involvement with gymnastics competition, through the Amateur Athletic Association of Canada, continued for many years,³ and his commitment to this sport accounted, in large part, for the stress laid upon gymnastics in the Pro-Rec programme.

Another important leader was Mrs. Hilda Keatley, who joined the staff in 1936-37, and became chief instructress for Vancouver in 1937-38.⁴ She was educated at Dartford College, England, from where she received her diploma in physical training. Mrs. Keatley continued with the Pro-Rec

¹Comprehensive Report, 1935-36, p. 55.

²*Infra*, pp. 117-118.

³Nurmburg, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

⁴Interviews with Hilda Keatley, February 21st, 1976 and May 23rd, 1977.

programme until 1953, and her enthusiasm and competence were particularly evident in the women's portion of the mass Pro-Rec displays held in Vancouver every year. Her special interests lay in dance and Swedish gymnastics.¹

THE PRO-REC PROGRAMME

Eisenhardt believed that a successful public programme was one that appealed to a wide variety of people, and showed tangible and beneficial results.² He outlined the significant aspects of the Pro-Rec programme in the following statement:

1. Growing realization on the part of the people that
(a) physical education does not stop upon graduation from school, no more than does education of the mind and soul; (b) physical fitness is as important for work as it is for play.
2. Variety of activities insures wide appeal and encourages active participation by every member, irrespective of age or sex.
3. All-roundness, rather than specialization, helps to attain the same end, the "star athlete" idea being superseded by the "everyone an athlete" idea.
4. Free public nature of classes brings together persons who might never meet otherwise, for all racial, social, political and religious differences are forgotten on the gym floor and the athletic field.³

The regular Pro-Rec programme presented at winter session centres emphasized gymnastics and games, but a wide range of additional activities were also offered. Some centres provided instruction in special

¹ *Ibid.*

² Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, p. 2 introductory letter to G.M. Weir.

³ British Columbia, Department of Education, Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Growth of Provincial Recreation Centres", printed leaflet, 1938-39 (from private collection of Pro-Rec materials held by Thomas Ruben, Abbotsford, B.C.; hereinafter referred to as "Ruben Collection").

activities such as swimming. Also operating under the aegis of Pro-Rec were sports teams participating in regular city competitions. The programme included social activities at centres and special inter-centre competitions. In addition, a programme of activities was sponsored by Pro-Rec during the summer months. The content of this total programme was well-established by the time World War II started, and, with minor variations, remained the same until 1953.

Basic Winter Programme

A typical class at a Pro-Rec centre was two to three hours in length, with an average of thirty members in attendance. To some extent, the facilities and available equipment determined the content of the class, but most Pro-Rec activities could be conducted in any of the halls or gymnasias used by the Branch. The class opened with mass exercises, or calisthenics, followed by gymnastics activities on mats and apparatus. Group games completed the programme for men, but women's classes also included dancing.¹

Men's instructors were asked to organize their three hour sessions as follows:

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Registration, and changing into gymnasium costume | 15-20 minutes |
| 2. Fundamental gymnastics, including passive and
bench exercises | 20-30 minutes |
| 3. Heavier apparatus work (rings, high bar, parallel
bars, weightlifting) | 30 minutes |
| 4. Lighter activities, mat and springboard tumbling,
and vaulting | 30 minutes |

¹Public Schools Report, 1937-38, p. 76.

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| 5. Free period for practice on apparatus | 20 minutes |
| 6. Games, group games, volleyball and basketball;
club swinging, pyramids, partner tumbling, etc. | ----- ¹ |

Instructors were urged to vary their opening order routines for interest, and to regularly introduce new exercises into the fundamental gymnastics table. Following this, the group was divided into squads, each with a leader. Rotation of squads was encouraged, to permit members to work on a number of pieces of apparatus during the evening.²

The suggested programme for women's classes was:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. Registration | 15 minutes |
| 2. Folk dancing, chiefly simple couple dances | 20 minutes |
| 3. Fundamental gymnastics, including "Keep Fit",
benchwork, and pairs activities | 40 minutes |
| 4. Dancing - folk, tap | 40 minutes |
| 5. Games, tumbling, and vaulting | 50 minutes ³ |

As with men's classes, variety was stressed. A differentiation was made between fundamental exercises and Keep Fit activities. The latter were less strenuous, and required less demanding positions. They were designed for older women, or for women not yet accustomed to energetic physical exercise. It was suggested that instructors alternate groups of three to four fundamental exercises with groups of Keep Fit activities.⁴

¹"Information and Duties of Instructors", October 29th, 1936, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3.

²"Instructors' Handbook - 1938-39", *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

³*Ibid*, p. 9.

⁴*Ibid*.

PLATE IV



Men's Pro-Rec Programme - Gymnastics Activities
(*New World*, October, 1940)

PLATE V



Women's Pro-Rec Programme - Keep Fit Exercises
(*New World*, October, 1940)

At all times, the corrective aspects of the fundamental exercises were stressed, for both men and women, so as to improve posture. Each instructor was expected to diagnose and correct faulty posture habits.¹

Instructors were provided with detailed materials from which to develop their classes. These materials were made available at the annual summer school, which all instructors attended. The textbook for this summer school became the instructor's manual for the year. Included in the textbook were: detailed descriptions of fundamental gymnastics and Keep Fit routines; exercises on the stall bars; pyramids and tumbling routines; mat work and springboard tumbling; vaulting; directions for folk, ballroom, and ballet dances, including accompanying music; information about track and field, life-saving, and fancy diving; condensed rules for most indoor and outdoor sports; and descriptions of small group games and contests.²

In Vancouver and Victoria, the annual mass display held in the spring after the winter season was completed was an important consideration in the content and progression of the basic programme at each centre. The display routines planned by the staff were prepared for the previous summer school, included in the textbook for that year, and practised at the centres during the winter.³ Instructors were discouraged from commencing practice of the display routines too early in the season,

¹ "Information and Duties of Instructors", October 29th, 1936, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

² British Columbia, Department of Education, Recreational and Physical Education Branch, *1939 Summer School of Recreational and Physical Education: Official Textbook* (Vancouver, 1939).

³ Interview with Hilda Keatley, May 23rd, 1977.

but were expected to include sections from the display table gradually, so that by the end of the season, the class could move through the entire display routine easily.¹ Problems encountered with this orientation towards the display were seen in the statement to instructors that, if the display work was introduced at stages throughout the season, they could "avoid the excessive rush and pressure before Display time, so detrimental to the Centre routine, and . . . one of the chief causes of the drop in attendance at the end of the season."²

The inspiration for the gymnastics aspect of the Pro-Rec programme was the Danish gymnastics system as developed and promoted by Niels Bukh, with his famous Folk School at Ollerup and his tours of Danish gymnasts so well-received in North America in the 1920's and 1930's.³ Bukh developed the system known as "Primitif Gymnastike", translated into English as "Fundamental Gymnastics",⁴ the term used in the Pro-Rec programme. In this system, corrective work was emphasized, and preceded other forms of gymnastics activities in each session. Emphasis was placed on mobility, strength, and agility; stretching exercises were of paramount importance; and rhythm was a basic ingredient in exercise routines. The instructor gave cues for the next exercise so that the rhythm was maintained and the class was kept moving effectively, without

¹"Instructors' Handbook - 1938-39", *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

²*Ibid.*, p. 9.

³Nurmburg also concluded that the basic programme of Pro-Rec was derived from Bukh's system of fundamental gymnastics; see Nurmburg, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

⁴Niels Bukh, *Fundamental Gymnastics*, trans. by E.R. Andrews and K. Vesterdal (New York: E.R.Dutton and Co., 1928).

a break between exercises.¹

The influence of the Danish system was evident from various viewpoints. The first was in the content of the Pro-Rec textbook, which demonstrated a direct application of Bukh's system.² The second similarity was shown in the basic pattern followed in the class session, which was very similar to that proposed by Bukh.³ The corrective aspect of Pro-Rec work was also stressed to instructors, another feature of Bukh's system.⁴ Eisenhardt, himself a Dane, acknowledged the source of his programme in an article published in *The Gymnast* in 1938; in discussing the gymnastics exercises presented at Pro-Rec centres, he stated that: "the Danish system, on which these exercises are based, for sheer rhythm and timing cannot be surpassed".⁵ Mathisen, the senior men's instructor, in another *Gymnast* article, referred to the Pro-Rec exercises as Danish,

¹Ellen Gerber, *Innovators and Institutions in Physical Education* (Philadelphia: Lea and Febiger, 1971), pp. 181-184.

²c.f. *Official Textbook: 1939*, and *Fundamental Gymnastics*.

³Gerber, in describing the contents of Bukh's book, referred to the twelve sample tables included therein, and summarized a typical table as follows:

The work was basically divided into three groups. In the first the students did free standing exercises using light, general, introductory movements. In the second, heavier and more strenuous work was performed either alone or in pairs, at the stall bars or on the floor. Marching was inserted next, as a suitable break, and was followed by the third group consisting of vaulting and tumbling exercises. See Gerber, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

This programme is very similar, in both content and sequence to the men's sessions described for the basic Pro-Rec programme, *supra*, pp. 102-103.

⁴"Information and Duties of Instructors", October 29th, 1936, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁵*Gymnast*, IV:8 (December, 1938), p. 10.

and included a table of physical weaknesses and types of corrections that was found in almost identical form in the English translation of Bukh's work.¹ The influence of Danish gymnastics was also seen in the women's programme, but was combined with elements of Swedish gymnastics.²

Games were an integral part of the regular centres' sessions, but facilities and lack of equipment placed limitations on the activities that could be played. One game that was particularly suitable for Pro-Rec classes was floor hockey; played with a broom handle and a large rubber disc, it could be adapted easily to all types of facilities. Another game, purportedly the creation of Pro-Rec instructors during the early years of the programme,³ was "goodminton". This game, played according to volleyball rules, used home-made paddles of table tennis size, badminton shuttlecocks, and a volleyball net.⁴ A simple and popular game, it was still being played in some physical recreation programmes in B.C. forty years after Pro-Rec was established.

The basic programme outlined for instructors presupposed a three-hour session and a fully-equipped facility, including a piano for women's classes.⁵ Such was not the case with all centres throughout B.C., and programmes varied widely in their content and length. In the Fraser Valley, for instance, where a successful programme was conducted from

¹*Gymnast*, I:4 (February 24th, 1936), p. 1.

²*Official Textbook: 1939, op. cit.*; see also Ian Eisenhardt, text of address, "Why Recreation Centres", 1936; interview with Hilda Keatley, May 23rd, 1977.

³Interview with Paul King, former Pro-Rec Public Relations Officer, Vernon, B.C., September 1st, 1976.

⁴*Daily Province*, February 1st, 1936, magazine section, p. 5.

⁵Interview with Hilda Keatley, February 21st, 1976.

1936 onwards, the instructors served a number of communities. In the early years, the instructors travelled from centre to centre, visiting a different one each night. Equipment was transported to each centre in a truck, and two or three classes would be conducted in one evening. Two-hour sessions for young boys, women, and finally men would be presented at most centres.¹ The programme for men usually consisted of fundamental gymnastics in the form of an exercise table, work in two's and three's, and pyramid-building activities.² Most of the halls were not suitable for major sports; they were not equipped for badminton or basketball, and the ceilings were too low for volleyball. Therefore, gymnastics for all groups, plus dance for the women, were the main activities, with some games of low organization included for variety.³

Regular programmes in other areas also varied from the prescribed pattern established by the administrative staff. The following excerpts from instructors' weekly report in 1936 demonstrate these variations:

Victoria. Memorial Hall, 60 attending ladies' class - tap dancing, Irish jig, and ballet dancing.

Lake Hill. Men and women classes; attendance 40. Exercises and games, tap dancing, folk dancing, skipping drill.

Burnaby. Young men; Danish exercises and tumbling; 26 present.⁴

The emphasis on gymnastics, and activities related to it, was quite apparent, even from this brief examination of the basic winter

¹Interview with R.J. Phillips, May 19th, 1977.

²Interview with Thomas Ruben, former Fraser Valley Pro-Rec Supervisor, Abbotsford, B.C., May 25th, 1977.

³Interview with R.J. Phillips, May 19th, 1977.

⁴Ian Eisenhardt, "Why Recreation Centres", 1936, pp. 2-4, *passim* (Eisenhardt Collection).

programme. This emphasis was to become a perennial source of criticism of Pro-Rec, and this was evident as early as 1936-37, when Eisenhardt, in his annual report stated that "one criticism has often been raised . . . that gymnastics are stressed too much."¹ He justified this, however, by emphasizing the need for corrective activities, saying that participation in sports and games alone would not produce the desired result of all-round development of the individual.

Summer Programme

Originally intended for the winter months only, Pro-Rec was expanded to include a reduced summer programme for July and August, 1935. Demands for this expansion had been made public within three months of the programme's inception, in a newspaper editorial which praised the new plan, and stated that, while there were many things that a person could do in Vancouver during the summer, many people could not afford these activities; a summertime Pro-Rec was clearly needed.² The first year of these summer programmes was financed by a \$1,000 contribution from the City of Vancouver, because it was felt that the provincial government should not bear the cost of a programme serving Greater Vancouver only.³ However, in later years, the summer activities were funded as a regular part of the total programme.

Summer centres were generally limited to Vancouver and Victoria, but were extremely popular in these two areas, as the following table illustrates. The total number of summer centres was fourteen in 1935;

¹ *Public Schools Report*, 1936-37, p. 79.

² *Daily Province*, February 20th, 1935, p. 6.

³ *Public Schools Report*, 1935-36, p. 116.

this increased to thirty-nine in 1938. It is interesting to note that, unlike the winter sessions, the summer registrations for women were consistently lower than those for men; this is probably a reflection of the activities offered in the summer programmes, in which the emphasis was on sports instead of the gymnastics and Keep Fit activities provided at the winter centres.

TABLE 6
SUMMER REGISTRATIONS: 1935-38¹

Year	Men	Women	Total
1935	518	467	985
1936	599	723	1,322
1937	851	638	1,489
1938	2,043	1,002	3,045

During the first summer season, archery, gymnastics, track and field, swimming, and life saving classes were held, in Vancouver, New Westminster, and West Vancouver.² The following year saw the addition of cricket and tennis, and only Vancouver and Victoria conducted summer activities.³ By 1938, gymnastics was no longer offered, but softball and rowing were added.⁴ Finally, the pre-war summer programme was

¹ See Appendix D. Figures for the 1939 summer season are not available.

² Comprehensive Report, 1935-36, p. 63.

³ Comprehensive Report, 1936-37, p. 157.

⁴ Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, pp. 3-15.

completed by the establishment, in 1939, of the Stanley Park Open-Air Centre.¹

The summer activities were inexpensive to operate, because they did not require indoor facilities. They were easy to organize and usually culminated in a tournament or an examination for an award. The report of activities for the summer of 1938 gives an indication of the manner in which these programmes were typically presented.

Archery. Conducted in Stanley Park, these classes were led by Mr. E. McDermott, and were climaxed by the annual three-day Pro-Rec Archery Tournament. These classes were started in 1935, and stimulated considerable interest in this sport; as a result, a private club, the Greenwood Archers, was formed in 1938.²

Cricket. Coaching sessions for young boys were held in Vancouver, Victoria, and Vernon. Five coaches, headed by Mr. Robert Quinn of Vancouver, conducted the programme. Practice sessions and matches were arranged from mid-April to July or August. Equipment was made available on loan from the B.C. Lower Mainland Cricket Association. Because of the Pro-Rec programme, cricket was included in the sports and physical education programme of many schools in the Lower Mainland.³

Rowing. This select sport was organized for 1938 only, and conducted by

¹ *Public Schools Report*, 1939-40, p. 89.

² *Comprehensive Report*, 1938-39, p. 11.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-8. Pro-Rec was also instrumental in arranging the first Dominion Junior Cricket Championships, held in Vancouver in July, 1939, in conjunction with the B.C. Mainland Cricket Association. This championship was won by the B.C. team, trained by Pro-Rec instructors. *Public Schools Report*, 1938-39, p. 79.

a Pro-Rec instructor expert in the field, Mr. H. Atkinson. The programme was oriented towards the training of a crew of four, and four boys from the North Shore were chosen. The Vancouver Rowing Club co-operated by supplying equipment.¹

Softball. Volunteer leaders organized this sport, resulting in some dissatisfaction with the quality of the programme, although attendance was good.² This activity was not presented in 1939.

Swimming and Life Saving. Classes were conducted at two Vancouver pools, and in Ladner and West Vancouver. At the end of the summer, forty-five Royal Life Saving Society awards were granted to Pro-Rec members. It was suggested that more members would have qualified if they had been able to afford the fee for the certificate.³ A swim gala was also held in West Vancouver in late August.⁴

Tennis. One of the most popular Pro-Rec summer activities, tennis classes were held at public parks in Vancouver, at the Lawn Tennis Club in Victoria, and at clubs in the Okanagan Valley. Tournaments were conducted throughout the spring and summer at each park, and inter-park matches were arranged at the end of August. A special training programme for selected juniors was organized in Vancouver, in co-operation with the

¹ Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, pp. 13-15.

² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 10. In 1936, Pro-Rec had won the Bessborough Cup, emblematic of the highest number of life-saving awards gained by an organization teaching this activity, when 264 members received Royal Life Saving Society awards. This cup was again won by Pro-Rec in 1939. *Gymnast*, II:2 (December, 1936), p. 1.

⁴ Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, p. 22.

B.C. Lawn Tennis Association. Some of these juniors were sent to tournaments in Southern California.¹

Track and Field. Twilight meets were held at Hastings Park from June to August,² and practices were conducted every weekday evening and on Saturday afternoons.³

The Open-Air Centre, established in the summer of 1939, was a unique activity. With the co-operation of the Vancouver Park Board, an area fifty feet by one hundred feet was enclosed by rope, on the open meadow near Second Beach in Stanley Park. Daily afternoon and evening sessions for men and women were conducted, and activities included fundamental exercises, Keep Fit routines, tumbling, vaulting, boxing, wrestling, weightlifting, and volleyball.⁴ In effect, Pro-Rec was providing the essentials of its basic winter programme in an outdoor, summer setting.

Sports Programme

Although gymnastics was the most prominent activity in most Pro-Rec centres during the winter season, the total programme was by no means restricted to the typical sessions described in a previous section. Organized sports were featured very prominently, especially after the first year of the programme. The method of organization varied with the sport. In some cases, the scheduled centre presented that activity only;

¹*Ibid.*, pp. 3-5, 21-22.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

³*Daily Province*, July 11th, 1939, p. 6.

⁴*News-Herald*, August 1st, 1939, p. 12.

swimming and basketball centres were typical of this arrangement. Other sports programmes culminated in annual inter-centre tournaments, such as those for gymnastics and boxing. Still other sports, namely soccer and field hockey, were organized as Pro-Rec teams and entered in city leagues. Finally, some sports were less structured, offering instruction, and if possible, some competition on a more informal basis. Irrespective of the type of competition, all sports programmes provided practice times, with a Pro-Rec instructor or coach assigned to the group. The scope of organized sports was very broad, and Pro-Rec clearly accepted the provision of these activities as part of its overall responsibility for physical recreation in the programme. It appears that the only limitations were availability of equipment, and the ability of members to incur individual costs for participation.

Annual Pro-Rec championships, held towards the end of the winter season and theoretically intended to be province-wide, were the most important sports events of the year. In its first year of operation, Pro-Rec sponsored a novice boxing championship, and a cross-country race for men. At first, the boxing event included only three divisions (featherweight, lightweight, and middleweight),¹ but by 1937 this was expanded to eight classes.² Free instruction in boxing was provided by Pro-Rec instructors at a number of centres in Vancouver, on a regular schedule.³ Cross country racing remained a popular feature, and the 1935-36 season saw the inauguration of a women's race. That year, the

¹*Gymnast*, II:5 (March-April, 1937), p. 4.

²*Gymnast*, V:2 (March, 1939), p. 28.

³*Gymnast*, I:2 (November 25th, 1935), p. 1.

men's distance through Vancouver's Stanley Park was three and one-half miles, while that for women was one and one-half miles.¹ However, by 1938, the distances had been increased to six miles and two and one-half miles, respectively.² Weekly practices were held during the 1937-38 season, at Brockton Oval in Stanley Park.³

During the second season, 1936-37, four more annual championships for Pro-Rec members were presented. A swim gala was held at Crystal Pool in Vancouver, for members of Pro-Rec swimming classes. The gala grand aggregate championships were based upon participants entering all three classes of competition — swimming, diving, and life-saving.⁴ Table tennis and weightlifting championships were also started in 1936. Table tennis was a regular activity in those centres where equipment was available, and this championship was a logical development on the Pro-Rec programme. Weightlifting was also featured in the centres, with equipment supplied by Pro-Rec. The 1936 event was the first weightlifting championship ever to be staged in B.C. Participants competed in the three standard Olympic Games lifts, so that comparisons could be made with the results of other competitions.⁵ In 1938, Pro-Rec undertook sponsorship of the first B.C. Open Provincial Weightlifting Championships, in addition to its own annual closed novice event.⁶

¹*Gymnast*, I:5 (March 4th, 1936), p. 1.

²*Gymnast*, IV:2 (February-March, 1938), p. 26.

³*Gymnast*, III:2 (November, 1937), p. 7.

⁴Comprehensive Report, 1935-36, p. 35.

⁵*Gymnast*, I:6 (March 25th, 1936), p. 1.

⁶Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, appendix.

The most important event of 1936 was the first annual Pro-Rec gymnastics championships. Not only did this become the major Pro-Rec championship event of each successive year, but it also introduced an important element into the sport of gymnastics in British Columbia. Nurmberg stated that Pro-Rec "provided the stimulus for the development of competitive gymnastics",¹ and that the centres became the focal point for gymnastics in B.C., during Pro-Rec's nineteen years of operation.² The gymnastics championships were highly organized, and drew entrants from outside the Greater Vancouver area, unlike the other sports championships. Each centre was required to stage its own competition, according to regulations established by the central office. Centre champions were declared and then participated in district competitions, wherever possible. The provincial championships were conducted in Vancouver, and were usually held just before or after the Annual Mass Display, thus ensuring the maximum number of competitors.³ Events included mat tumbling and box vaulting for men and women, springboard tumbling, pyramids, parallel bars, and high bar for men only, and a dance team competition for women.⁴ In 1939, 122 women and 120 men gymnasts from thirty-seven centres participated in the fourth annual championships, while still other women's teams competed in Keep Fit categories.⁵

The first Canadian Gymnastics Championships to be awarded to B.C.

¹Nurmberg, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

²*Ibid.*, p. 197.

³Comprehensive Report, 1936-37, p. 29.

⁴Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Rules for Third Annual Gymnastics Championships", mimeographed, 1938 (Ruben Collection).

⁵Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Results of 1939 Gymnastics Championships", mimeographed [PABC: 8.8.5.c No.28].

were held in 1939, and were staged by Pro-Rec.¹ B.C. gymnasts won all events, and Art Warburton, a Pro-Rec gymnast was declared All-Round Champion.² However, only gymnasts from B.C. competed in these championships, because of problems of distance, time, and expense.³ Mathisen, chairman of the Championships, and Pro-Rec chief instructor, recommended that, in future, Western and Eastern championships be staged, with the winners meeting at a central point such as Winnipeg, to determine Dominion champions.⁴

By 1939, wrestling had been added to the annual boxing championships,⁵ and tournaments were staged at Pro-Rec centres during the winter, in preparation for the novice closed championships at the end of the winter session.⁶ Instructors for both sports conducted free sessions at selected centres.⁷

The Pro-Rec indoor track meet was first held in 1936, in Queen's Park Arena, New Westminster. Running events and tug-o-war contests were featured.⁸ At the second meet, in 1938, 450 entrants from forty different centres in Greater Vancouver and the Fraser Valley participated.⁹ A related but unusual inter-centre event was the Road Race

¹ Amateur Athletic Union of Canada, "Canada's Gymnastics Championships - April 22nd, 1939", printed brochure (Keatley Collection).

² *Daily Province*, April 25th, 1939.

³ Nurmberg, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

⁴ Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, appendix.

⁵ *Gymnast*, V:2 (February-March, 1939), p. 28.

⁶ *Gymnast*, IV:2 (February-March, 1938), p. 26.

⁷ *Gymnast*, III:3 (December, 1937), p. 7.

⁸ *Gymnast*, I:4 (February 24th, 1936), p. 1.

⁹ *Gymnast*, IV:2 (February, 1938), p. 26.

and Paper Chase, sponsored by the Abbotsford centre, in April, 1937.¹

Some sports were more suited to inter-centre league competition than to a single tournament. Basketball was one such activity, and was keenly contested in many regions. Vancouver's Pro-Rec Basketball League for 1937-38 consisted of six teams in the west division and eight teams in the east, with play-offs producing a final winner.² Girls' basketball was started in 1937, the same year that a basketball coach was hired by Pro-Rec to conduct instructional sessions at specified centres.³ Basketball games were scheduled in the Fraser Valley,⁴ and games were also played between Prince George and Quesnel, in Northern B.C.⁵ Inter-centre soccer, volleyball, and goodminton games were played in the Fraser Valley on a regular basis.⁶ Inter-centre box soccer, the game of soccer played indoors in a large hall, was introduced in Vancouver in December, 1935.⁷

Centres staged their own competition in yet other activities, declaring champions for such events as skating, in Vernon.⁸ The Lower Vancouver Island region produced a number of unusual centres champions,

¹ Comprehensive Report, 1936-37, p. 30.

² *Gymnast*, III:3 (December, 1937), p. 8; see also *Gymnast*, IV:2 (February, 1938), p. 26.

³ *Gymnast*, III:3 (December, 1937), p. 7; see also *Gymnast*, III:2 (November, 1937), p. 8.

⁴ *Gymnast*, III:3 (December, 1937), p. 7.

⁵ Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Pro-Rec Bulletin," II:10 (December, 1938), p. 2 [PABC: 8.8.5c No.28].

⁶ Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, pp. 80, 97, 99.

⁷ *Gymnast*, I:3 (January 2nd, 1936), p. 2.

⁸ Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, p. 88.

individuals who excelled in such esoteric sports as: dive for distance, four-cornered tug-o-war, Indian wrestling, and press-ups competition. One centre in the Fraser Valley declared the winner of its handwalking contest, and Vancouver conducted a basketball free-shot contest.¹

Soccer and field hockey, the first for men and the second for women, were the only sports for which teams entered regularly-scheduled competition in Vancouver city leagues. Both teams made their debut as Pro-Rec teams in their respective leagues in the fall of 1936.² The soccer team was outfitted by a donation from the local Rotary Club and entered in the second division of the Vancouver and District league.³ The following year, a second junior team entered the second division of the Greater Vancouver Athletic Association.⁴ Teams practised two afternoons each week⁵ which suggests that the team members were unemployed. In addition to sponsoring these teams, Pro-Rec worked with soccer officials to promote the sport in Vancouver schools.⁶ One of the few references to Pro-Rec and the unemployment relief camps which were disbanded in 1935 was a newspaper announcement of the first event in a planned programme for games and sports in the relief camps: a soccer match between the men of Camp 206 and the North Shore Football Club.⁷

¹*Ibid.*, pp. 74-92 *passim*.

²*Gymnast*, II:2 (December, 1936), p. 8.

³*Public Schools Report*, 1936-37, p. 81.

⁴*Gymnast*, III:1 (October, 1937), p. 8.

⁵*Gymnast*, IV:1 (January, 1938), p. 4.

⁶Letter to Ian Eisenhardt, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, from F.A.A. Barrs, Vancouver, February 2nd, 1937 [PABC: 8.9.4 -8.9.5g].

⁷*Vancouver Sun*, November 13th, 1935, p. 15.

In field hockey, a second team was formed in 1938,¹ and both teams were regularly entered in the Greater Vancouver Women's Grass Hockey Association winter schedule. The teams practised twice weekly in the afternoons at Connaught Park,² where their Saturday matches were played.

Sports instruction was a feature of the Pro-Rec programme, and in addition to the activities described above, centres for other sports were an established part of the winter schedule. Skiing instruction was provided on Hollyburn and Grouse Mountains near Vancouver.³ During the winter of 1939, a special "Ski Week" was conducted on the three North Vancouver mountains, and 1,657 participants received expert instruction.⁴ Archery was continued during the winter months, two afternoons each week at Beatty Street Drill Hall in Vancouver.⁵ Competitions were arranged with a Victoria club in 1937,⁶ and an international archery tournament was staged in 1938 against Seattle archers.⁷ Kamloops centres also provided archery instruction and competition.⁸ A Pro-Rec hiking club was organized in Vancouver,⁹ and the Walking Club

¹Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, p. 24.

²*Gymnast*, IV:1 (January, 1938), p. 4.

³*Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁴Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, p. 26.

⁵*Gymnast*, II:2 (December, 1936), p. 6.

⁶*Gymnast*, II:5 (March-April, 1937), p. 4.

⁷Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, p. 28.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 90; see also "Pro-Rec Bulletin" (December, 1938), *op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁹"Pro-Rec Bulletin" (December, 1938), *op. cit.*, p. 4.

sponsored a walking race in association with the Pro-Rec annual cross-country run in 1939.¹ Other sports promoted on a small scale in a few centres included fencing in Vancouver and Prince Rupert,² judo in Penticton,³ and badminton in Princeton.⁴

It was the declared policy of Pro-Rec that as many opportunities as possible be available to all members to participate in some form of sports competition, at the centre, district, or provincial level. In order to encourage weaker or less skilled members, handicap systems were arranged, or class divisions established.⁵ Vancouver and Victoria were the scenes of most of the larger competitions, but all centres throughout the province staged contests and tournaments, where appropriate. From October, 1938 to March, 1939, 419 league and inter-centre sports events were held at Pro-Rec centres throughout B.C.⁶

Social Activities

Important features of the programme of a typical Pro-Rec centre were the social events organized throughout the year by the instructors and the centre committees. Dances were the most popular social events, and each centre was encouraged to hold dances at the beginning and end of the season;⁷ Christmas dances were also popular.⁸ Open nights,

¹*Gymnast*, V:2 (February-March, 1939), p. 23.

²*Gymnast*, III:3 (December, 1937), p. 7.

³*Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, p. 79.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 93.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 92.

⁷Comprehensive Report, 1936-37, p. 32.

⁸Interview with Grace Walton, former Vancouver Pro-Rec instructor, North Vancouver, B.C., May 30th, 1977.

with gymnastics displays and square dancing, were staged in most centres at least once a year, and these were often a means of encouraging visitors to join the centre.¹ Some centres produced amateur hours, with prizes awarded, and a dance following the demonstration of talent.² Whist drives were often combined with dances,³ while Halloween parties, concerts, banquets, roller skating parties, raffles, film showings, scavenger hunts, bridge nights, and sleigh parties were featured in programmes throughout the province.⁴

The following calendar of events for the month of February, 1938, demonstrates the extent of social events in Pro-Rec centres:

Feb.4th--Whist Drive and Dance by North Shore Centre at the K.P.Hall, North Vancouver.

Feb.6th--Templeton Whist Drive and Dance at I.O.O.F.Hall, Hastings and Kamloops Street.

Feb.11th--Centre Dance at the Crystal Gardens, Victoria.

Feb.14th--Valentine Dance at Fairmont Academy by the Men's Class and Ladies' Remedials.

Feb.17,18,19--Jubilee Centre Gym. Display at the Royal Oak Theatre on Kingsway.

Feb.18th--Display and Dance at Agassiz.

Feb.22nd--Open Night at Esquimalt.

Feb.24th--Gym. Competition at Victoria High School

Feb.25th--Display and Dance at Prince George.⁵

Large dances in the major cities were popular affairs. In Victoria, the Crystal Gardens was the scene of an annual dance attended

¹ Interview with Hilda Keatley, February 21st, 1976.

² Comprehensive Report, 1936-37, p. 31.

³ Scrapbook of printed Pro-Rec materials (Keatley Collection).

⁴ Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, pp. 78-92.

⁵ *Gymnast*, IV:5 (January, 1938), p. 24.

by over three hundred people, and proceeds from this dance went toward costumes and travelling expenses for members who visited other districts for competitions and displays.¹ Vancouver staged an all-centres dance each year, held in a downtown ballroom such as the Palomar.² For the smaller dances, individual centres could hire a small band, such as "Ernie Grant and his Pro-Rec Orchestera".³

Many of the social events were fund-raising affairs, and proceeds went toward the purchase of extra equipment, or a piano for the centre.⁴

These social events, together with the extensive sports programmes that augmented the basic class activities, provided members with a range of activities not available to them in any other manner, for most of the Pro-Rec members could not always afford other forms of physical and social recreation. Pro-Rec in the 1930's appeared to have anticipated the community centres of a later period.

Special Programmes

Drama groups operated in association with Pro-Rec during the 1930's, and were jointly sponsored by Pro-Rec and the community self-help organizations.⁵ The first annual drama festival for these community groups was held in 1936, and by 1939, groups were operating in seven

¹ Comprehensive Report, 1936-37, p. 32.

² "Pro-Rec Bulletin" (December, 1938), *op. cit.*, p. 1.

³ *Gymnast*, V:2 (February-March, 1939), p. 21.

⁴ Interview with Grace Walton, May 30th, 1977.

⁵ *Gymnast*, V:2 (February-March, 1939), p. 22.

Pro-Rec centres, with a registration of 241.¹

A significant contribution made by Pro-Rec during its formative years was the development of youth hostelling in B.C. Because the youth hostelling movement was organized by a private association, it required an administrative committee from the private sector. This was accomplished in the spring of 1938, with a committee chaired by Alan Chambers, of Victoria. The organizer of hostels for the Puget Sound region in Washington State had requested a hostel on the Saanich Peninsula of Vancouver Island, to complete a loop of hostels across Puget Sound and the Straits of Juan de Fuca. British Columbia municipal and provincial authorities co-operated, and a camp located at Mt. Douglas, near Sidney on Vancouver Island, was opened for the summer of 1938.² By June, 1939, a chain of hostels had been established along the north side of the Fraser River as far as Harrison Hot Springs.³ The Pro-Rec office was always closely associated with, and gave its full support to, the youth hostel movement. Eisenhardt became the British Columbia representative to the Canadian Youth Hostel Association, and Alf Batcheler, a member of the Victoria Pro-Rec staff, was secretary of the B.C. Youth Hostel Committee.

ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

General Administration

The Pro-Rec programme was administered by the Recreational and

¹Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, pp. 31-34.

²*Gymnast*, IV:5 (July, 1938), p. 5.

³*Vancouver Sun*, June, 1939, n.d.

Physical Education Branch of the Department of Education, and the Director was answerable to the Minister of Education. Although some direction was given by the Deputy Minister of Education from time to time, the greater majority of administrative and policy decisions were made by the Minister, in consultation with the Director.

The head office for Pro-Rec was initially located in the Pacific Building in downtown Vancouver, but was later moved to the Hall Building, where it remained for many years.¹ The head office staff consisted of the Director, the Registrar, the Public Relations Officer, and a secretary. In addition, senior provincial instructors for men and women operated from this office.

Pro-Rec administration was highly centralized, with identical handbooks, forms, and memoranda distributed to all instructors in the province, and reports and registration forms returned from all centres to the head office. There was a conscious attempt to standardize the basic programme offered in all centres, effected by the summer school course for instructors, and the basic equipment provided by Pro-Rec.

Reports and Records

The most important record-keeping function of the head office centered around registration and attendance. These figures were important, in the early years, because increases in members registered made it easier for the Minister of Education to receive approval from the Cabinet and the Legislature for additional funds toward the Pro-Rec programme. Later, when British Columbia entered into a cost-sharing

¹Eisenhardt Personal Report, December 5th, 1934; see also *Gymnast*, II:1 (November, 1936), p. 2.

agreement with the federal government, these records served as the basis for calculations, and accurate accounts were a necessity.

New members completed a registration form at their centres. In addition to basic information such as address, age, height and weight, members were also asked for the date of their last medical examination, and for details about their membership in athletic organizations.¹ In 1936-37, this form was modified to provide a record of the various centres with which a member had registered, and the achievements and awards gained by the member in the Pro-Rec programme.² With the inauguration of dominion-provincial agreements, members were registered as either employed or unemployed, with coloured cards used to differentiate between these two categories. This led to problems for both members and instructors, for many of the unemployed members did not want to declare, in this public way, their employment status.³ The person on relief was required to indicate this on the registration card,⁴ and to avoid embarrassment, many unemployed members simply registered as employed. In the words of one instructor, "if they took a white card, they took a white card. After all, you couldn't call them liars, even if you knew. People's feelings were easily hurt."⁵ Figures given for unemployed members during the Depression were therefore much lower than

¹ Recreational and Physical Education Branch, Registration form, Vancouver, B.C. n.d. [PABC: 8.9.4 - 8.9.5 g, Box 10-21, File No. 15B].

² Comprehensive Report, 1936-37, p. 145.

³ Interview with Thomas Ruben, May 25th, 1977.

⁴ British Columbia, Department of Education, Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Registration Card for a Member who is Not Gainfully Employed", printed form D1-5M-842-9060 (Ruben Collection).

⁵ Interview with Grace Walton, May 30th, 1977.

the actual numbers.

Weekly activity reports were submitted by instructors, showing accumulative registration, and attendance according to unemployed and employed categories. To avoid checking attendance on the basis of employment status, the proportion of registrations at the centre in these two groups was applied to the attendance for all sessions throughout the season. The activity report also listed those activities conducted during the session, and remarks about special situations.¹

In addition to these weekly reports, instructors were required to submit, from time to time, a number of other reports, illustrating the administrative detail usually associated with government programmes: special reports for non-class activities; financial reports for monies collected by the centre from special events; accident reports; workmen's compensation forms for instructors sustaining injuries while on duty; equipment request forms; and annual reports submitted at the close of the centres' season.² In the main, instructors were continually completing reports, and the Pro-Rec Registrar at the head office was kept busy recording this weekly flow of information.

As might be expected, this administrative structure produced some problems for the Branch and resulted in extra work on the part of the Registrar, Eric Martin. His correspondence files for this period contain many references to incorrectly-completed reports and registration forms, insufficient postage, failure to remit cash for items requested, and

¹"Instructors' Handbook - 1938-39", *op. cit.*, p. 6.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

failure to submit weekly reports.¹ This latter problem was the most persistent, and eventually resulted in a directive from the head office, stating that monthly pay cheques to instructors would be held back until tardy reports were received.²

Head office records were used to develop a card-index of each member's involvement with Pro-Rec.³ Also, when a registered member failed to attend classes, attempts were made, with a mailed form letter, to determine the reason for non-attendance.⁴

The presence of juniors in many Pro-Rec classes produced administrative difficulties. Because those under sixteen years of age were not included in the dominion-provincial agreements, juniors could not be registered as members in the usual way. Therefore, their attendance was reported only on the activity report forms⁵ and in this way, the provincial programme was offered to the junior age group without any infringement of the regulations established by Ottawa.

Administrative Staff

Pro-Rec was administered by a small staff centered in the head office in Vancouver. This staff was headed by the Director, Ian Eisenhardt, and in the early years included the Registrar, Eric Martin,

¹ British Columbia, Department of Education, Recreational and Physical Education Branch, Correspondence File - General [PABC: 8.9.5 a].

² Letter to M. Gregory, Pro-Rec Instructor from E. Martin, Pro-Rec Registrar, Vancouver, B.C., January 25th, 1939 [PABC: 8.8.5 a].

³ *Public Schools Report*, 1936-37, p. 79.

⁴ *Public Schools Report*, 1937-38, p. 77.

⁵ Recreational and Physical Education Branch, Bulletin to Pro-Rec instructors from E. Martin, Pro-Rec Registrar, Vancouver, B.C., December 8th, 1938, mimeographed [PABC: 8.8.5 c].

and Eisenhardt's secretary, Miss Ella Cail.¹ The Registrar was responsible for the recording of registration, attendance, and activity reports from centres. The editor of the Pro-Rec publication, *The Gymnast*, also operated from the office. In addition, Jerry Mathisen held the position of Provincial Chief Instructor,² and was responsible for the technical, or instructional, aspects of the programme.

Eisenhardt's activities included: speeches to community groups; inspection of centres; consultations with the Minister of Education and with officials in various governmental branches; appointment of instructors; establishment of new centres; and appearances throughout the province at special events such as displays and social activities. He spent much of his time promoting and publicizing Pro-Rec, and his activities often took him away from Vancouver.³

By 1938, the head office staff had been expanded, and consisted of: the Director, the Provincial Chief Instructor, the Chief Instructress, the Chief Instructor for Vancouver, the Registrar, the Staff Secretary (that is, an office manager), and a stenographic staff of three.⁴

Instructors

There is no doubt that the instructional staff was the most important element in the total Pro-Rec programme. On the shoulders of the instructors rested the success or failure of any given centre, and the level of success attained by Pro-Rec during the latter part of the

¹ Comprehensive Report, 1936-37, p. 76.

² *Ibid.*, p. 74.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 90-106.

⁴ Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, p. 171.

PLATE VI



Pro-Rec Staff and Instructors, 1937-38
(Eisenhardt Collection)

1930's would not have been realized without good instructors, irrespective of the quality of head office administration or the degree of government funding.

For the most part, instructors were well-trained in the activities of the Pro-Rec programme; they were enthusiastic, hard-working, young, athletic, and able demonstrators.¹ They received their basic instruction from the Pro-Rec summer course but, during the year, most instructors were under the supervision of a chief instructor. These supervisors taught at their own centres, but were also responsible for the instructors at other centres as well.² Regions with chief instructors were: Vancouver and District, New Westminster and District, Victoria and District, Upper Fraser Valley, Lower Fraser Valley, and Southern Interior (chiefly the Okanagan Valley).³ Further information was provided in annual instructors' handbooks, and in memoranda distributed from time to time by the head office.

In addition to providing instruction in the physical recreation activities of the centre, a Pro-Rec instructor was expected to: organize displays and competitions for the members;⁴ assist the centre committee in the execution of its duties; serve as a minor publicity officer for the centre,⁵ submit reports to head office; set a proper

¹Interviews with R.J. Phillips, May 19th, 1977, and Hilda Keatley, May 27th, 1977.

²Interview with Hilda Keatley, February 21st, 1976.

³Comprehensive Report, 1936-37, pp. 74-76.

⁴Letter to members of Pro-Rec staff from Ian Eisenhardt, Vancouver, B.C., January 19th, 1937 [PABC: 8.9.4 - 8.9.5 g, Box 2e-3c 1].

⁵"Instructors' Handbook - 1938-39", *op. cit.*, p. 12.

tone for discipline and conduct in classes and serve as a model for the members;¹ grade members according to individual ability;² perform first aid as required;³ supervise, and place orders for, equipment used at the centre; and sell crests to members.⁴ All in all, a remarkably wide range of demands and responsibilities was given to the hardworking instructors, most of whom were employed on a part-time sessional basis, with wages paid according to the numbers of hours the centre was in operation.⁵

The expertise required of instructors covered a long list of physical activities. The men were expected to have a sound knowledge of tennis, badminton, soccer, English and Canadian rugby, volleyball, basketball, gym or floor hockey, softball, handball, boxing, wrestling, archery, track and field, preliminary tumbling, Danish and Swedish gymnastics, preliminary apparatus work, parallel bars, high bar, vaulting, and box and springboard work.⁶ The women instructors required the same kind of expertise, with additional knowledge of ballet, tap, folk, square, and ballroom dance, and less emphasis on some of the games.⁷ In addition, a first aid certificate was required, as well as knowledge

¹"Information and Duties for Instructors", October 29th, 1936, *op. cit.*

²Instructors' Handbook - 1938-39", *op. cit.*, p. 8.

³Public Schools Report, 1935-36, p. 2.

⁴Letter to members of Pro-Rec staff from Ian Eisenhardt, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, B.C., January 19th, 1937, *op. cit.*

⁵Interview with Hilda Keatley, February 21st, 1976.

⁶Daily Province, February 1st, 1936, magazine section, p. 5.

⁷Official Textbook: 1939, *op. cit.*

of life-saving techniques and aspects of personal hygiene.¹ Special instructors were also appointed for boxing, wrestling, life-saving, basketball, archery, tennis, and cricket.

Initially, Eisenhardt obtained his instructors from among playground directors with the Vancouver Park Board,² and from trained physical education specialists and gymnastics teachers in Vancouver and Victoria.³ In later years, instructors were drawn, more and more, from the actual Pro-Rec membership, as outstanding members demonstrated their leadership and athletic ability.⁴ In areas where new centres were established, every effort was made to find someone in the community who had the potential to become a good instructor, and who would be willing to attend the summer course for instructors.⁵ By 1937, approximately eighty per cent of instructors and assistants had originally been regular members of centres.⁶

The leading instructors in Vancouver were among the best qualified, with a wide variety of experience prior to their appointment to the Pro-Rec staff. The 1935-36 staff included individuals with the following backgrounds:

1. five years as assistant playground director;

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Public Schools Report*, 1934-35, p. 75.

³ Interview with Thomas Ruben, May 25th, 1977.

⁴ Interviews with R.J. Phillips, May 10th, 1977 and Hilda Keatley, May 27th, 1977.

⁵ Interview with Ian Eisenhardt, December 12th, 1976.

⁶ *Public Schools Report*, 1937-38, p. 78.

2. graduate of Vancouver Normal School; holder of Strathcona Trust certificate;
3. four years on playgrounds; holder of Royal Life Saving Society Award of Merit;
4. five years as playground director;
5. Sadow System instructor;
6. five years as playground director; finalist in 1924 English gymnastics championships;
7. playground director, University of B.C. soccer team captain; B.C. junior badminton champion; holder of B.C. teacher's certificate;
8. gymnastics instructor; member of Norwegian championship gymnastics team;
9. Margaret Eaton School graduate;
10. graduate of Ollerup School of Gymnastics, Denmark;
11. playground director; holder of R.L.S.S. Diploma; Life Guard Corps member.¹

It can be seen from this list that only a small number of instructors had taken courses leading to a diploma or certificate in physical education, and that none had a university degree in that subject. Many of these instructors had been playground directors, but this work did not require any training in the teaching of physical activity. There were, however, senior instructors in New Westminster and Victoria at this time with a background in physical education, and subsequent appointments included individuals with diplomas from English physical education

¹*Gymnast*, I:1 (November 4th, 1935), pp. 1-2.

colleges, and from B.C. normal schools.¹

Although most of the appointments of instructors were satisfactory, there were, of course, some individuals who proved less than adequate. In Ashcroft, the instructor was simply unable to persuade the young men in the district that they should come to his Pro-Rec centre. He blamed this on the attitude of the people who lived there, but Eisenhardt quite clearly felt that the instructor needed more experience and training, and strongly urged him to attend the Pro-Rec summer course. The Ashcroft centre was closed in mid-season because of poor attendance.² Another poor situation developed in a West Vancouver centre, where the instructor of the men's classes was "incapable of teaching the boys anything constructive;" he was dismissed in mid-season and the replacement instructor brought the attendance back almost to normal within a short time.³ The most remarkable instance of instructor incompetence was the case of the Prince Rupert instructor who set fire to his hall by throwing hot ashes from the hall stove against the outside of the building; the instructor was not fired immediately but he did not return after that season was finished.⁴

Instructors in some rural districts were also hired by the local school board to teach physical education classes for school students, and arrangements were made for Pro-Rec use of school facilities and equipment.⁵

¹ Interview with Hilda Keatley, February 21st, 1976.

² British Columbia, Department of Education, Recreational and Physical Education Branch, Correspondence File [PABC: 8.9.4 - 8.9.5 g].

³ Comprehensive Report, 1935-36, p. 28.

⁴ Correspondence File, *op. cit.*

⁵ *Vancouver Sun*, October 16th, 1937, p. 6.

This procedure was adopted in the Fraser Valley in January, 1937, when the Pro-Rec instructor, Paul King,¹ was appointed to conduct physical education classes for the students in one of the school districts in that region. The school board paid the difference between his Pro-Rec salary and that for a teacher with a minimum high school teaching certificate (he was a graduate of the University of British Columbia, with a teaching diploma).² Prince Rupert also instituted a similar arrangement,³ and a number of other school districts organized classes for their students at the Pro-Rec centres.⁴ However, this close association did not prevail throughout the province; the Vancouver School Board was actively opposed to participation by school children in Pro-Rec classes, and for many years, this was a source of friction in Vancouver.

Instructors were assisted, during classes, by volunteer leaders, members of the centres chosen for their abilities as performers. This enabled the instructors to provide adequate leadership and instruction for a large class by dividing it into small groups of ten to twelve members, and assigning a leader to each group. Leaders were graded according to three "star" categories; a three-star leader was one who could direct the entire class in floor exercises for a short time, and take groups in the various gymnastics activities presented; he was a competent demonstrator, could give support for advanced stunts, and was

¹ In 1940, Paul Kozoolin changed his name to Paul King; throughout this study, he is referred to as Paul King.

² Letter to Ian Eisenhardt from Wm. Plenderleith, Inspector of Schools, Mission-Sumas-Abbotsford School District, Abbotsford, B.C., December 8th, 1936. [PABC: 8.9.4 - 8.9.5 g].

³ *Public Schools Report*, 1935-36, p. 117.

⁴ *Daily Province*, September 15th, 1937, p. 7.

able to explain technical points in the teaching of skills. Special classes for leaders were arranged by instructors during the season, and in Vancouver, leaders' classes were organized in one location for all centres.¹ As an incentive, a special crest was designed for leaders only,² and the better ones were encouraged to attend the summer course for instructors.³

The Pro-Rec central office expected instructors to wear specified uniforms. Men ordinarily wore a white singlet with the instructor's badge, blue trousers with a white stripe, and white gym shoes; special dress was required for displays and parades. Women instructors wore a dark blue gym suit and white gym shoes, and their parade uniform was a white suit.⁴

Training of Instructors

The annual Pro-Rec summer school for instructors was one of the most important features of the total programme. The primary functions of the school were to train new appointees and to offer refresher courses for those already appointed, but it also served a useful purpose as a training centre for physical education teachers in British Columbia schools. Over the years, many teachers attended the Pro-Rec summer school, and were thus able to supplement their Normal School education.⁵

¹Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, p. 23.

²Letter to members of Pro-Rec staff from Ian Eisenhardt, Vancouver, B.C., January 19th, 1937, *op. cit.*

³"Information and Duties for Instructors", October 29th, 1926, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

⁴"Instructors' Handbook - 1938-39", *op. cit.*, pp. 8, 10.

⁵Report to S.J. Willis, Deputy Minister of Education, from Ian Eisenhardt, Pro-Rec Director, for the period from October 1936 to March 1938, Vancouver, B.C. (Ruben Collection).

All Pro-Rec instructors were expected to attend the summer course every year, and promising leaders from centres were also invited to enrol. In addition, prospective instructors in rural communities, chosen because of their close association with their own region, were asked to attend the school before commencing their duties.¹

Within a few months of the commencement of the Pro-Rec programme in 1934, it was evident that the demand for centres would quickly exceed the supply of available instructors, such as Vancouver playground directors. Eisenhardt's solution was not to hire existing trained personnel, but to produce an entirely new source. The following excerpt from a 1937 edition of *The Gymnast* best describes the philosophy underlying this decision:

But there still remained . . . the task of finding properly trained young men and women to conduct these Centres.

Now, this was not merely a matter of engaging, say, a score of gymnasium and athletic club trainers and telling them to "go ahead and work on all comers." No, so far as the Centres were concerned, the day of the circus "strong man" type of trainer had definitely passed; likewise, because the Centre members came of their own free will and consisted of both young men and women literally "from 16 to 60," the sergeant-major type was ruled out, too. This decision left only the "specialist" and the teacher of physical education as possible candidates for the position. Of these two, the former was deemed prohibitive because of the remuneration he expected, the latter — while perhaps perfectly well suited to the children's classes — was hardly qualified to conduct recreative gymnasium classes for adults.

Accordingly, the Department decided to bring up a type of Recreation Centre instructor all its own by instituting training classes for its leaders and assistants, and by organizing summer school courses for anyone particularly interested in the Centres' year-round activities.²

This policy of using members as volunteer leaders, and later training the

¹Interview with Ian Eisenhardt, December 12th, 1976.

²*Gymnast*, III:1 (October, 1937), p. 2.

better ones as future Pro-Rec instructors, was effective in solving the problem of staffing, but it did produce a rather insular group of instructors, with limited experience in physical recreation programmes.

The first summer courses were held in 1935, one in Vancouver, from May 18th to June 19th, and the other in Victoria, from May 26th to June 26th. A total of fifty-five individuals enrolled.¹ The following summer, four courses were organized, two in Vancouver and two in Victoria, with a total enrollment of 131.² In subsequent years, only two courses per year were offered, with annual enrollments of 120 to 130 students. Fees for the course were ten dollars, and included a copy of the textbook. Additional fees were levied for the St. John's first aid certificate. All students were required to pass a medical examination prior to registration. Eligibility for the course was non-restrictive; "all teachers, gymnastics instructors, and others interested in physical training" were invited to attend.³

By 1939, the summer school was well-established as a six-week course, and the Pro-Rec textbook was developed to supplement course instruction.⁴ Theory and activity courses were offered, and a heavy schedule of classes was presented. The following schedule of women's classes for 1939 outlines the subjects studied:

¹Public Schools Report, 1935-36, p. 116.

²Public Schools Report, 1936-37, p. 80.

³Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Fourth Summer School Course of Physical Education and Recreation", Vancouver, B.C., May 15th, 1938, mimeographed [PAC: RG 27/697/Y12-1-8(2)].

⁴See Appendix G for contents of 1939 textbook.

FIGURE 1

PRO-REC SUMMER COURSE SUBJECTS FOR WOMEN - 1939¹

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:00	Applied Anatomy	Applied Anatomy	Applied Anatomy	Applied Anatomy	Applied Anatomy
10:00	Kinesiology	Kinesiology	Kinesiology	Kinesiology	Kinesiology
11:00	Fund. Gym.	Fund. Gym.	Fund. Gym.	Fund. Gym.	Fund. Gym.
12:00	Ballet, Folk	Soft shoe, Folk	Ballet	Soft shoe, Folk	Vaulting
2:00	Vaulting	Tumbling	Tap dance	Tumbling	Ballet, tap
3:00	Remedial Gymnastics	Ball rhythms	Games	Keep Fit	(Tennis (Archery
4:00		Life Saving	Track	Life Saving	(Fencing (Cricket
Evening	First Aid		Archery		
Saturday: 1:00 to 4:30 - Archery					

The men's curriculum was similar to that for women, except that gymnastics and related activities were given more emphasis; the men's course did not include dance classes.²

The teaching staff normally consisted of senior Pro-Rec instructors, supported by community experts in certain activities such as tennis, basketball, archery, first aid, track and field, wrestling, and cricket. Visiting instructors were occasionally appointed; in 1939, for example,

¹Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Summer Course: Women's Timetable", mimeographed (Keatley Collection).

²"Fourth Summer School Course", *op. cit.*

the twenty-two member staff included two professors from the University of Washington, who taught the anatomy and kinesiology courses.¹

At the end of the course, closing ceremonies were held, at which successful students received a diploma.² In addition, Pro-Rec operated a system of instructor's certification, which normally spanned a three- or four- year period. The first requisite was a leader's certificate, awarded to a member of one or two years experience who had obtained satisfactory marks in two summer courses. This member was then eligible for an instructor's certificate, upon successful completion of two more summer courses plus two years as an assistant instructor in a centre. By 1940, approximately seventy-five per cent of the Pro-Rec teaching staff consisted of individuals who had followed this route.³

Facilities

The availability and suitability of facilities was always a problem for the Pro-Rec staff. Repeated references to this over the years suggests that the lack of adequate facilities throughout the province restricted Pro-Rec expansion more than any other factor. Because of the general economic climate during the Depression, no plans could be made to build new structures, and the Pro-Rec programme was confined to the use of existing facilities. This often resulted in make-shift arrangements, and taxed the ingenuity of community leaders and Pro-Rec administrators. An excellent example of this creative approach

¹ *Official Textbook: 1939, op. cit., p. 2.*

² See Appendix H: Certificate for Summer School Course.

³ Letter to R.F. Thompson, Supervisor of Youth Training, Department of Labour, Ottawa, from Ian Eisenhardt, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, February 27th, 1940 [PAC: RG 27/698/Y12-1-8(7)].

was the use of a Vancouver motion-picture theatre during the 1936-37 season, where the members performed their exercise routines in the theatre aisles.¹

Most Pro-Rec centres were located in school gymnasias, and in church and community halls. During the first season, 1934-35, Pro-Rec centres were located in twelve schools, a Department of National Defence drill hall, two private gymnasias, a church hall, a public swimming pool, and a community recreation pavilion.² In some instances, rentals were charged, while other locations were provided rent-free.³ By 1938, the range of facilities had expanded, and the proportion of churches and community halls was higher. The list of centres throughout B.C. for that year showed the following types of locations: schools, church halls, community halls, a dancing academy, halls owned by fraternal organizations and labour unions, a Legion hall, a neighbourhood house, sports clubs and private gymnasias, one Y.M.C.A., two drill halls, a scout hall, two public pools, an auditorium, the Provincial Normal School, and a horticultural hall.⁴ Of these centres, forty were rented by the Pro-Rec, and seventy were provided rent-free.⁵

Some of the facilities were satisfactory, but many were far from suitable. Problems included: cramped conditions, poor lighting, lack of heat, unsafe locations for young women travelling at night, and

¹ *Daily Province*, October 16th, 1937, magazine section, p. 3.

² Ian Eisenhardt, script of a radio address presented over Station CRCV, Vancouver, B.C., January 29th, 1935, pp. 7-8 (Eisenhardt Collection).

³ Eisenhardt Personal Report, December 5th, 1934, *op. cit.*

⁴ Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, pp. 41-68.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 113-115.

equipment storage too far from the activity area.¹ Eisenhardt stated, in 1937, that with better facilities, the number of members could be doubled; he felt that many individuals became discouraged by inadequate arrangements, and stopped attending their centres.²

Another source of difficulties was the Vancouver School Board, whose gymnasias were extensively used by Pro-Rec. From the first year, the Board appeared reluctant to give unqualified support to Pro-Rec, and this was reflected, in part, by its attitude about the use of its facilities. Although many school districts throughout the province provided gymnasias free of charge, or charged for heat and light only,³ the Vancouver School Board applied its regular rental policy to Pro-Rec use of school gymnasias.⁴

Vancouver churches also presented financial obstacles, but the cause of this problem was a city by-law, and affected more than just the Pro-Rec programme. In the 1920's, the City of Vancouver passed a church tax exemption by-law, by which the property of a given church would be exempt from municipal taxation only if no church building was used for commercial gain.⁵ This precluded the possibility of a church recovering its overhead expenses by charging admission, and meant that the church hall could not be rented to outside groups such as Pro-Rec without

¹ Comprehensive Report, 1936-37, pp. 11-34.

² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³ Letter to H. Hines, Secretary, Vancouver School Board, from Ian Eisenhardt, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, B.C., October 7th, 1936 [PABC: 8.9.4 - 8.9.5 g, Correspondence with Vancouver Schools].

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Daily Province*, October 14th, 1938, p. 30.

being liable for taxation. The athletic programmes of Vancouver city churches were seriously curtailed by this by-law, and many church halls that could have been used for Pro-Rec centres were not available. Some churches provided facilities free of charge, and one large downtown church entered into a co-operative undertaking, whereby Pro-Rec was given the use of the gym for adult classes, in return for conducting classes for the boys and girls of the parish.¹ Some churches did rent their facilities, in spite of the resultant taxes, but the number was very small; in 1938-39, Pro-Rec was using only twelve church halls in Vancouver, seven of which charged rental.² During the lifetime of Pro-Rec, this taxation problem was not resolved, and many suitable halls and gymnasias were left unused.

Although the administrative staff was able to obtain minimal facilities for Pro-Rec centres in most parts of the province, the general standard of these gymnasias and halls did not approach the level desired. The use of school buildings was innovative, and if this had been given greater support by all educational authorities, the problem of facilities would have been largely solved. However, as Osborne has stated, this concept was "ahead of its time, and the climate for the broader use of school buildings was not quite as receptive as it should have been."³

¹Comprehensive Report, 1936-37, p. 14.

²Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, pp. 114-115.

³Osborne, "Origins of Physical Education in British Columbia", *op. cit.*, p. 24.

Equipment

One of the most pressing problems faced by Eisenhardt and his staff during the first few years of the Pro-Rec programme was the need to provide equipment for the basic gymnastic activities conducted in each centre. This equipment was not normally available in B.C. schools during the 1930's, and it was necessary to make arrangements for the local construction of the standard items supplied to each centre. During 1935-36, woodworking classes established for unemployed young men under the Provincial Director of Technical Education constructed a number of items for Pro-Rec,¹ but, by 1937, local firms were supplying most of the equipment needed.²

At first, Pro-Rec was only able to provide each centre with the barest necessities: one springboard, one vaulting box, and two mats,³ but, by 1939, the range of equipment at various centres included all items required to conduct satisfactory programmes in: apparatus gymnastics, boxing, wrestling, and volleyball, as well as equipment for other optional sports such as: cricket, basketball, archery, grass hockey, rugby, soccer, track and field, and weightlifting.⁴

The Pro-Rec Branch did not supply all of the equipment used in every centre. In some instances, local groups took the initiative, and

¹Comprehensive Report, 1935-36, pp. 14-15.

²British Columbia, Legislative Assembly, *Sessional Papers, Public Accounts - 1937-38*, p. EE 73.

³Letter to M. Eckhardt, Superintendent of Schools, Mission School Board, from Ian Eisenhardt, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, B.C., February 1st, 1937 [PABC: 8.9.4 - 8.9.5 g].

⁴Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Pro-Rec Equipment Report", November 17th, 1939, mimeographed [PABC: 8.8.5 c, No. 28].

made both facilities and equipment available, as a condition of obtaining an instructor for its Pro-Rec centre.¹ Service clubs in some communities donated equipment,² and members at individual centres occasionally staged fund-raising events for the purchases of special items such as pianos.³

One of the most important legacies of Pro-Rec to the physical education programmes in B.C. was the vast amount of equipment purchased over the years. When Pro-Rec ended in 1953, most of the gymnastics equipment was left at the schools and halls in which centres had been located, and for many years afterwards, the familiar yellow-stencilled "Pro-Rec" label was to be found on apparatus in dozens of school gymnasias throughout the province.

Finances

Each year, the British Columbia Legislature voted funds for all branches and divisions of the Department of Education. The Pro-Rec Branch received its basic funding in this way,⁴ as a part of the Adult Education division.⁵ The first grant, for 1934-35, was \$12,500, but this was intended to cover only the remaining five months of the 1934-35

¹ Interview with Thomas Ruben, May 25th, 1977.

² *Gymnast*, V:1 (January, 1939), p. 19.

³ Interview with Hilda Keatley, February 21st, 1976.

⁴ The only exception to this annual system of funding occurred in 1934-35, when a special warrant was approved by Government Order-in-Council to bring Pro-Rec into existence after the Department of Education budget had been approved for the year. Order-in-Council No. 1346, *op. cit.*

⁵ British Columbia, Legislative Assembly, *Sessional Papers, Public Accounts*. See Appendix E.

fiscal year (November to March). The first full year's appropriation, for 1935-36, was \$16,000, and by 1938-39, this had increased to \$42,645.¹ This sharp increase was a reflection of the expansion of the programme, with 174 centres and a registration of 26,831 by 1939.

In 1937, an important federal development resulted in further grants to Pro-Rec, in addition to the basic amount voted each year by the provincial legislature. In that year, the *Unemployment and Agricultural Assistance Act* was passed by the Parliament of Canada, making funds available for the alleviation of unemployment distress.² Under its Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Program, the *U.A.A. Act* facilitated an agreement between the Canadian Government and the Province of British Columbia for "a project designed to provide physical training and health education for unemployed young people".³ In this manner, additional funds were granted by the federal government, with a matching grant from the Province of B.C., to expand the existing recreational opportunities for unemployed young people.⁴ As a result of these additional allocations under the Youth Training Program, the money available to Pro-Rec increased even more, and by 1938-39, the total annual amount granted to the programme was \$75,645, composed of the following:

¹ Amounts given in the text are rounded-off, for ease of presentation. See Appendix E for exact amounts and sources of information.

² Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, March 29th, 1937, p. 1763.

³ Canada, *The Unemployment and Agricultural Assistance Act*, 1937, Chapter 44, *Statutes of Canada 1937*, 1 George VI, April 10th, 1937 (hereinafter referred to as *U.A.A. Act*).

⁴ Letter to R.F. Thompson, Supervisor of Youth Training, Department of Labour, Ottawa, from Ian Eisenhardt, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, B.C., October 8th, 1937 [PAC: RG27/697/Y12-1-8 (1)].

B.C. basic vote - Department of Education	\$42,645
Dominion contribution - U.A.A. Act	16,500
B.C. contribution - U.A.A. Act	16,500
	<u>\$75,645</u>

Over the five-year period under study, Pro-Rec received a total of \$194,682, as illustrated in Table 7.

TABLE 7
GOVERNMENT GRANTS TO PRO-REC: 1934-39¹

Year	Provincial ²	Federal ³	Total
1934-35	\$12,480.51		\$12,480.51
1935-36	15,999.99		15,999.99
1936-37	30,032.62		30,032.62
1937-38	52,521.78	8,002.30	60,524.08
1938-39	59,145.61	16,499.94	75,645.55

Table 7 illustrates an impressive six-fold increase in funds for Pro-Rec, made all the more impressive by the knowledge that this increase came at a time when the economy was only just beginning to rise from the nadir of the Depression. The decision of the federal government to provide funds for unemployment assistance was of singular importance in

¹See Appendix E for further details.

²Comprised of an annual appropriation by legislative vote for Adult Education plus a provincial matching-grant contribution under U.A.A. Act Youth Training Programmes agreements.

³Federal contribution made under U.A.A. Act agreements.

the promotion of Pro-Rec activities.

In the main, Pro-Rec's financial base was the government funds described above, but small amounts of money were available from other sources, as well. Financial policies were very flexible; the operating expenses of centres varied from district to district, and even within a district. Indirect grants were made by communities which provided facilities rent-free, or which purchased all or some of the equipment supplied for a centre.¹ In the summer of 1935, the City of Vancouver donated \$1,000 to Pro-Rec in support of the first summer programme offered in that city.² Individual centres also raised money for equipment, display costumes,³ hall rental,⁴ or even for the heating of water in the showers at the centre.⁵ Although it was the official Pro-Rec policy, during the 1930's, not to charge fees to members registered at centres, community committees were authorized to solicit contributions from their members, to help cover the costs assumed by the local sponsoring organizations.⁶

Capital funds for the construction or purchase of gymnasias or playing fields were not available,⁷ and although those funds would have been very welcome, this policy did restrict the general expenditures of Pro-Rec to the provision of instructors, equipment, and rental of facilities, and the necessary administrative and promotional costs associated

¹Comprehensive Report, 1935-36, p. 29.

²*Ibid.*, p. 116.

³Interview with Hilda Keatley, February 21st, 1976.

⁴*Gymnast*, II:2 (December, 1936), p. 4.

⁵*Gymnast*, III:3 (December, 1937), p. 3.

⁶"Instructors' Handbook - 1938-39", *op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁷Comprehensive Report, 1935-36, p. 48.

with the operation of the programme. Table 8 presents an analysis of expenses during the 1930's. The bracketed figures represent the percentage of the total grant allocation to each major category of expenditure.

TABLE 8
ANALYSIS OF PRO-REC EXPENDITURES: 1935-1939¹

Expenditure	1935-36	1936-37	1938-39
Salaries	\$9,206.90 (57.5)	\$20,222.48 (67.3)	\$48,692.50 (64.4)
Rental	2,382.40 (14.9)	2,125.32 (7.1)	5,686.19 (7.5)
Equipment	861.00 (5.4)	3,267.69 (10.9)	6,642.02 (8.8)
Other ²	3,549.69 (22.2)	4,417.13 (14.7)	14,624.84 (19.3)
Total	\$15,999.99(100.0)	\$30,032.62(100.0)	\$75,645.55(100.0)

It will be noted that the largest expenditure was for salaries; this included salaries for all instructors and the head office staff, as well as the Director's salary. From 1934 to 1939, salaries accounted for approximately sixty per cent of all Pro-Rec expenditures, for an accumulated total of over \$121,500. This can be regarded as a secondary contribution of Pro-Rec toward the relief of situations caused by the

¹The years given in this table are the only ones for which detailed financial statements are available. The Public Accounts of the Province of British Columbia do not present this breakdown of expenditures during this time period, and only list salaries separately. The figures in Table 8 represent a reconciliation of information from two sources: financial statements included in the Comprehensive Reports, and salaries listed in the Public Accounts.

²Includes: office supplies, incidentals and overhead, cartage, publicity, travelling expenses, automobile upkeep, and miscellaneous expenses.

Depression; the opportunity for salaried employment was of primary importance to many Pro-Rec instructors.¹

The Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Program agreement stipulated that the monies made available under this agreement were to be spent according to a specific formula. These funds could not be used to defray the costs of initially establishing a centre, but were to be applied only against the average per capita costs of providing the programme to unemployed people.² Instructors' salaries represented the largest allocation of these funds, with an additional twenty per cent of that amount going toward equipment costs, and a further ten per cent toward general expenses.³

From 1934 to 1939, Pro-Rec was able to present an extensive programme at a nominal cost. Table 9 lists the average annual cost per member for each of those five years. The high cost for the first year of operation can be attributed to the expense of establishing the programme, and in particular, to the purchase of equipment. Costs also decreased in later years because the increase in enrollment exceeded the proportionate increase in centres;⁴ this latter proportionate relationship was also reflected in the decreasing percentage of total budget allocated to rentals, as shown in Table 8.

¹ Interview with Phyllis Sanderson, former Pro-Rec instructress, Vancouver, B.C., May 24th, 1977.

² U.A.A. Act, Agreement, Schedule "D", *op. cit.*

³ Letter to R.F. Thompson, Supervisor of Youth Training, Department of Labour, Ottawa, from G.S. Pearson, Minister of Labour, Victoria, September 23rd, 1937 [PAC: RG27/697.Y12-1-8 (1)].

⁴ *Public Schools Report*, 1935-36, p. 116.

TABLE 9
COSTS PER MEMBER: 1934-39¹

Year	Cost per Member
1934-35	\$4.61
1935-36	2.84
1936-37	2.86
1937-38	2.84
1938-39	2.94

PROMOTION AND PUBLICITY

Introduction

During the 1930's, the public promotion of Pro-Rec was very intensive, and was responsible for much of the success of the programme. Every opportunity was used to gain publicity for Pro-Rec, and this phase of administration was so effective that, at a later date, the Director was asked to supply federal fitness authorities with information about Pro-Rec's public relations techniques.²

Most of the responsibility for publicity was delegated to Paul King. He established contacts with newspapers and radio stations, and arranged for publicity in connection with the opening of new centres in small communities. Prior to an opening, King would visit the district,

¹ *Public Schools Report*, 1938-39, p. 90.

² Letter to Doris Plewes, Assistant Director of Physical Fitness, Ottawa, from Ernest Lee, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, January 16th, 1948 [PAC: RG29/826/214-1-9 (2)].

and supply the local papers with information about Pro-Rec and the new centre. An "open house" would often be arranged at the opening, with a display of activities presented for interested local residents.¹

Publications

Pro-Rec received excellent newspaper coverage, especially during the five-year period prior to World War II. The five metropolitan newspapers of Vancouver and Victoria² frequently carried Pro-Rec news items, editorials, or lengthy articles in weekend supplements. The weekend articles, often two full pages with photographs, gave extensive information about the programme, and were usually written by Pro-Rec staff members. These articles were published two or three times each year, usually appearing in the early fall, immediately after the Christmas break, or just before the annual mass display. In addition, the weekly press in small communities carried items of local interest, and instructors were told how to make the best use of this publicity medium.

Articles were published in major magazines from time to time, such as that written for a 1939 issue of *Saturday Night*. Supplemented by a full page of photographs, the text of this long and approbatory article described the annual display of that year, and discussed the membership and the activities of the programme, as well as presenting a brief history of Pro-Rec.³ In addition, an article by Paul King, written for *The B.C. Teacher* in 1937, attracted the attention of the

¹Interview with Paul King, September 1st, 1976.

²"Instructors' Handbook - 1938-39", *op. cit.*, p. 12.

³Woollacott, *op. cit.*, pp. 13, 20.

editors of the bulletin of the American Physical Education Association.¹

Pro-Rec also published its own newspaper, *The Gymnast*, produced during the winter season and edited by Paul King. It started as a two-page, stencilled newsletter for the membership in November, 1935, and was initially sold for one cent. Very soon during the first year, it became free to all members, and was published six times, with a circulation of fifteen hundred to two thousand.² In November, 1936, the format was changed to a printed nine-inch by twelve-inch newspaper, of from four to eight pages, with five issues serving a circulation of five thousand to six thousand.³ The paper was still free to members, but donations were solicited.⁴ The increased costs of producing this newspaper were covered by commercial advertising. In this form, *The Gymnast* carried news items about Pro-Rec activities, reports from various centres, editorials relating to health and physical fitness, articles about gymnastics, and results of Pro-Rec sports events. Announcements of deadlines for competitions, dates for annual displays rehearsals, and schedules of classes further assisted in the achievement of the objective of *The Gymnast*, that is, to serve as the main link with members and centres.⁵

The January, 1938 issue of *The Gymnast* introduced a major change

¹ Comprehensive Report, 1936-37; see also Paul King, "Department of Recreation and Physical Education", *The B.C. Teacher*, XVI:7 (March, 1937), pp. 351-352.

² *Public Schools Report*, 1935-36, p. 116.

³ *Public Schools Report*, 1936-37, p. 79.

⁴ *Gymnast*, II:4 (February, 1937), p. 5.

⁵ *Public Schools Report*, 1936-37, p. 79.

PLATE VII

THE
GYMNAST

Published Monthly by the Department of Recreation and Physical Education

IN THE INTEREST OF

HEALTH ♦ BEAUTY ♦ DIET ♦ SPORTS



Hon. G. M. Weir
Minister



Ian Eisenhart
Director

Vol. 2. (Membership 7,500)

VANCOUVER, B.C., JANUARY, 1937

No. 3

REQUESTS FOR CENTRES SWAMP DEPT.
* * * **DATES FOR INTER-CENTRE COMPETITIONS ANNOUNCED** * * *
ENROLMENT FOR 1936 NEARS 8000 MARK

**LAST YEAR'S ENROLMENT
ALMOST DOUBLED**

ATTENDANCE 50,865

As week after week rolls by, so the Department's membership keeps mounting to more and more impressive heights, until what once seemed a daring prediction on the part of the Provincial Director when he said, "We'll aim at an enrolment of 10,000 British Colum-
(Contd. on Page 6)

LADNER TO GET DISPLAY

Delta residents will be rewarded for their patience at the end of this month, when a selected group of instructors and assistants, under the joint leadership of Provincial Chief Instructor Jerry Mathisen and Vancouver's Chief Instructress Dorothy Meilicke, plan to stage a demonstration of the Centres' activities in Ladner, B. C.

Thursday night, January 28th, has been chosen for this out-of-town display.

**DIRECTOR TO SPEAK
AT THE UNIVERSITY**

"Modern Recreational Experiments" will be the subject of Director Ian Eisenhart's lecture at the University of B. C. at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, February 23rd, when he speaks under the auspices of the Department of University Extension Courses.

Recreation Centre members who wish to take in this lecture should make application at the Recreational Headquarters, 914 Hall Building.

RADIO TIME CHANGED

Radio Station CJOR (600 kc.) which so courteously arranged for the Department to go on the air, has been forced to change our day from Thursday to Monday, according to Director Ian Eisenhart, now in charge of the broadcast. The time however, remains the same, namely 11:30 a.m.

Free Skiing Tuition Boon To Centres
Swim Gala Opens R. C. Competitions

Under the competent guidance of Finn Fladmark, the Hollyburn Ski centre opened on Jan. 9th.

Similar classes, free to all who care to hike up this well-known North Shore mountain, will be con-
(Contd. Page 5, Col. 4)

A swimming, diving, and life-saving gala will inaugurate the Department's imposing list of Inter-Centre Competitions drawn up for the next two months and leading up to the spectacular Massed display
(Contd. Page 8, Col. 1)

**M.-S.-A. Centres
Part of Experiment**

Integral part of the bold educational experiment which is being watched throughout this Province, the Matsqui-Sumas-Abbotsford Recreation Centres commenced their activities the second week in January after several organization meetings had been held in these communities by Instructor Paul
(Contd. on Page 7)

**Parent-Teachers
Aid Marpole R.C.**

Marking another milestone in British Columbia's march for "racial health," Marpole opened its first Recreation Centre on January 11th, under the sponsorship of the Marpole P.T.A. and at the particular instigation of its President, the energetic Mrs. W. H. Hayes.
The ladies of Marpole demon-
(Contd. on Page 2)

**58 CENTRES ESTABLISHED
IN THIS PROVINCE**

MORE APPLICATIONS

Just how starved British Columbians are for organized recreational and physical educational activities is forcibly indicated by the numerous and continued requests of progressive communities throughout the Province for the establishment of the Government's Recreation Centres in their respective areas.

Despite the fact that no less than 58 such Centres are now operating
(Contd. on Page 6)

**MINISTER WATCHES
BLIND GIRLS DANCE**

Keen appreciation of recreational work is evinced by pupils of the Vancouver School for the Deaf and Blind, whose girls were honoured on January 7th by a visit from the Hon. G. M. Weir, the Minister of Education, who observed the blind girls doing a Danish Country Dance. Evelyn Boyes of this Department's staff is in charge of these girls.

CLASS TIMES ON PAGE 7

So many inquiries have been received at the Department's Headquarters during the past few weeks regarding the location and the starting times of the various Recreation Centres, that The Gymnast has thought it advisable to publish the Revised Schedule of Classes as it stands at the moment of going to press. This will be found on page 7 of this issue.

COMING CENTRE EVENTS

Prince George Display	Jan. 20
Ladner Demonstration	Jan. 28
Swimming Gala	Jan. 29
West Van. Dance	Feb. 3
Amateur Hour and Dance	Feb. 4
Victoria Gym. Competition	Feb. 15
Director at U.B.C.	Feb. 23
Table Tennis Tourney	Feb. 23
Boxing Competition	Feb. 25-26-27

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... and how they LOVE IT!**



When children get tired of "just bread," try them with crisp, crunchy Ryvita Crispbread.
Made in England from the crushed whole-rye grain, it contains an abundance of nourishment for active, growing young bodies.
It may be used at every meal in place of ordinary bread, and many tempting dishes can be easily and quickly prepared with Ryvita Crispbread as a basis. AT ALL GROCERS.

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ENERGY-PRODUCING BODY-BUILDING

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in the purpose of the publication, and gave an indication of the direction in which Eisenhardt hoped his Pro-Rec programme would move. This issue was the first in a new series with a national, rather than a provincial, objective. It was now a magazine, rather than a newspaper, and was produced by an independent publisher. It was printed on eight-inch by eleven-inch glossy paper, and covered twenty-six pages. The cover read: *The Gymnast: Canada's Physical Recreation Magazine*,¹ and the magazine was sold to members and on news-stands for ten cents. Less space was devoted to Pro-Rec activities and more to articles appealing to a broader segment of the population. The July, 1938 issue carried articles on learning to swim, youth hostels, cycling, and a Y.W.C.A. summer camp.² Its orientation was still towards British Columbia, in spite of its claim to be national, and the Pro-Rec influence was very dominant; of the fifteen photographs in the July, 1938 issue, eleven were of Pro-Rec activities.³

One final change in the format of *The Gymnast* occurred in December, 1938, when the size was reduced to nine inches by six inches, and the number of pages increased to thirty-two. The contents were of the same kind: articles of a general nature on physical fitness and health, a small section on Pro-Rec centres news, and many advertisements.⁴ *The Gymnast* continued in this form until the outbreak of the War, when the publisher joined the armed services; with no one to handle

¹ *Gymnast*, IV:1 (January, 1938), p. 1.

² *Gymnast*, July, 1938.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Gymnast*, IV:8 (December, 1938).

the important tasks of advertisement soliciting and preparation of copy for printing, the magazine simply ceased publication.¹

During its four-year lifetime, *The Gymnast* was an effective voice for Pro-Rec, and its wide distribution further promoted the programme. It was particularly effective in its newspaper form, when it was available to all members free-of-charge.²

One other newsletter was produced by the head office, starting in 1937 and continuing throughout the history of Pro-Rec. This was the "Pro-Rec Bulletin," a stencilled weekly newsletter for instructors.³ The "Bulletin" contained more specific details of Pro-Rec activities than was found in *The Gymnast*, and served to facilitate the routine administration of the programme. It also carried social items about instructors and members, and was intended for display at each centre.⁴

Radio

Pro-Rec also made excellent use of radio broadcasting during the late 1930's, an innovation far ahead of its time. These broadcasts were started in November, 1936, and were made from Vancouver's Station CJOR. Weekly broadcasts, from 11:30 to 11:45 a.m., carried talks by staff members, as well as messages to all Pro-Rec centres in B.C.; musical interludes were also presented.⁵ For the first few months, Paul King

¹ Interview with Paul King, September 1st, 1976.

² Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, p. 35.

³ Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Pro-Rec Bulletin" (mimeographed), October 23rd, 1938 (Keatley Collection).

⁴ "Instructors' Handbook - 1938-39", *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁵ *Public Schools Report*, 1936-37, p. 81.

was the announcer, but was later succeeded by Eric Martin, Pro-Rec Registrar.¹ Topics by the main speakers included: posture training; walking; the dance in physical education; and fundamental gymnastics. Typical announcements concerned: the billeting of out-of-town participants in the annual mass display; an informal evening social to be held at a Vancouver centre; information about an upcoming archery tournament; and details concerning a centre display and swim gala.²

In October, 1937, the radio broadcast underwent a major change. It moved to the Vancouver CBC station, and became a daily "Gym of the Air", conducted Monday to Friday from 8:45 to 9:00 a.m. The broadcast consisted of a series of setting-up exercises to be performed by the home listener, and was conducted by Ernie Costain, a Pro-Rec instructor.³ The programme was broadcast from a large downtown theatre, and novices performed the exercises in the théâtre as Costain gave instructions, to ensure that the activities were simple enough for the average home listener.⁴ Copies of the exercises were mailed to home members of this "Gym of the Air".⁵ On Saturday mornings, the radio programme consisted of guest speakers and news from Pro-Rec centres.⁶ During 1937-38, 120 radio broadcasts were made.⁷

¹*Gymnast*, II:3 (January, 1937), p. 6.

²Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Radio Broadcasts, 1936-37" [PABC: 8.9.4 - 8.9.5 g, Box 2c-3c-1].

³*Gymnast*, III:1 (October, 1937), pp. 1-2.

⁴*Vancouver Sun*, October 16th, 1937, magazine section, p. 6.

⁵*Public Schools Report*, 1937-38, p. 78.

⁶*Gymnast*, III:1 (October, 1937), p. 1.

⁷Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, p. 73.

The series was discontinued after the 1937-38 season, because of Pro-Rec's inability to procure a suitable time on the air, and a competent radio exercise leader; but broadcasts were arranged in connection with the 1939 annual display and the Dominion Gymnastics Championships held in that same year. Also, a weekly fifteen-minute programme of exercises and centre news was conducted in 1938-39 from an Okanagan Valley radio station, and it was recommended that this practice be followed with stations throughout the province.¹

Motion Pictures

Films of Pro-Rec activities were made from time to time, and were used for promotional purposes. As early as 1936, one such film was produced, of a Pro-Rec demonstration staged at Stanley Park, on the occasion of Vancouver's Golden Jubilee celebrations. A five-minute motion picture, it opened with a parade of women members, who then performed fundamental gymnastics movements in unison. The men followed, with mat work, weight-lifting, tumbling, and vaulting.²

The 1938 Summer School was the subject of another documentary, which was made available to centres throughout B.C. and across Canada. Films were also made of the 1939 Annual Display, and of the Dominion Gymnastics Championships sponsored by Pro-Rec. These, too, were shown around the province and across the country.³ In addition, the American news film company, Fox Movietone News, produced two short films on

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

² British Columbia, Government Travel Bureau, "British Columbia's Pro-Rec", 16 mm film, VTR cassette copy (National Film Archives, Ottawa).

³ Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, pp. 37-38.

Pro-Rec events, in 1938 and 1939.¹

Displays

One of the most prominent aspects of the Pro-Rec programme was the display, a demonstration of activities given by members for the public. The display portrayed work done at the centres, and the usual activities were gymnastics stunts on apparatus and mats, mass exercise routines accompanied by music, and dances. It was the declared policy of Pro-Rec that each centre should present a display at least once a year, not only to give members a goal toward which to work, but also to publicize the programme and encourage others to join.²

Displays were of four kinds: small, irregularly-scheduled displays presented by the members of a centre for friends, relatives, and other interested members of the community; mandatory end-of-season displays presented by each centre or district,³ final mass displays at large centres, as a culmination of the year's work; and displays given by select groups of gymnasts performing on special occasions or on publicity tours for Pro-Rec.

Small, centre displays were presented as fund-raising affairs, in connection with centre dances, or at seasonal highlights such as the opening of the centre in the fall, or Christmas.⁴ Large displays at

¹Colin Browne, British Columbia Early Film Project, Provincial Archives, Victoria, B.C., fact sheets 547 and 718.

²Interview with Hilda Keatley, February 21st, 1976.

³Letter to members of Pro-Rec staff from Ian Eisenhardt, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, January 19th, 1937, *op. cit.*

⁴Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, pp. 172-184.

the end of the season were more structured, and represented many weeks of rehearsal by all members of a centre or a group of centres. The first final display held in Prince Rupert in 1936 was typical of these year-end affairs, and included: various types of exercises, mat tumbling, vaulting, rope skipping, Indian club drill, parallel bars work, Danish gymnastics, pyramids, folk dance routines, and group games. Men and women, boys and girls participated, in various group combinations.¹

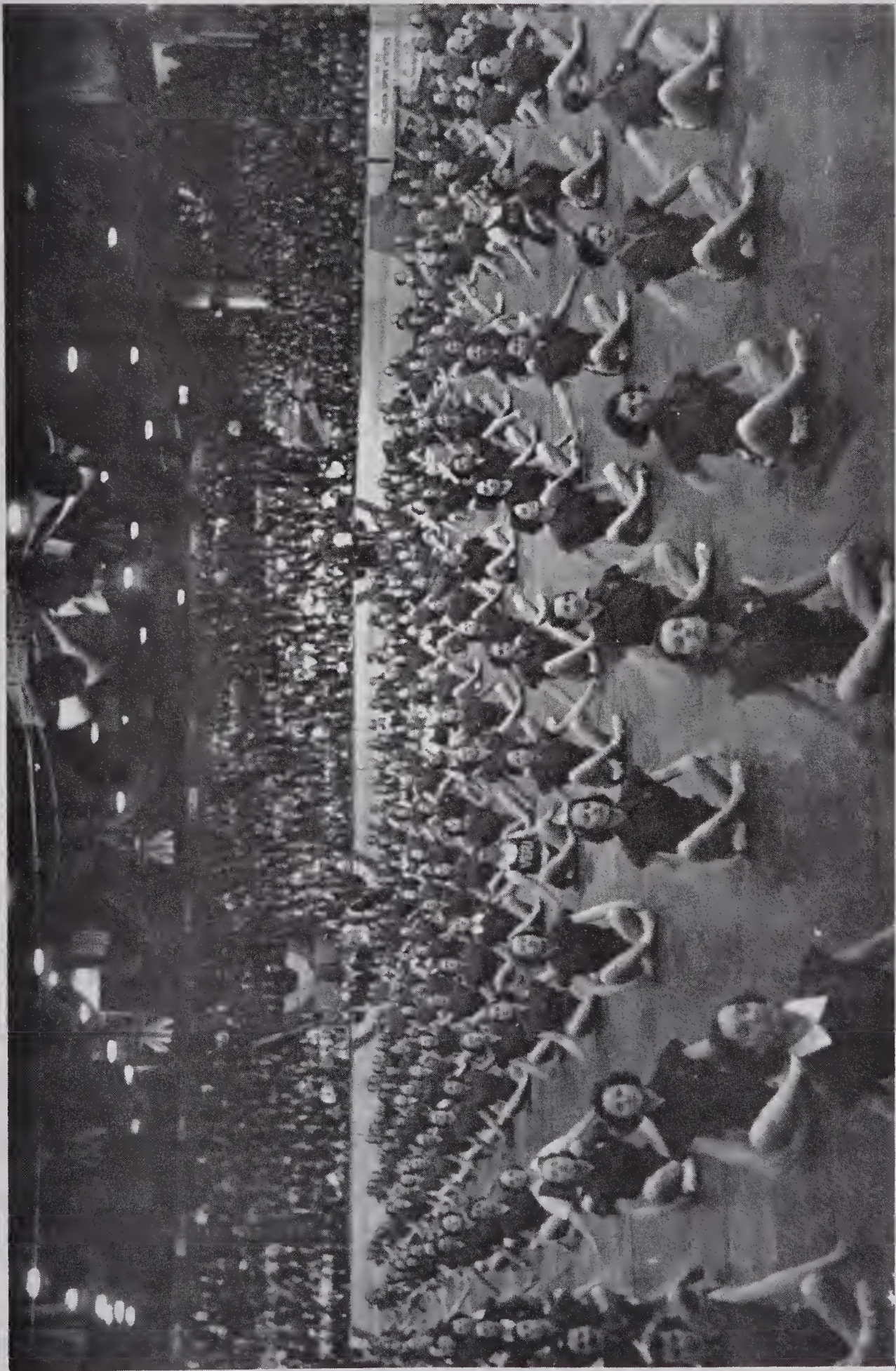
Victoria and District final mass displays were always well-presented and attracted many spectators. These events included participants from many districts, and were staged in large halls or auditoriums. As public awareness of the Pro-Rec programme grew, the numbers of participants and spectators increased significantly. In 1936, the Victoria display, with eighty members performing, drew only three hundred spectators; however, by 1938, three hundred members were demonstrating their skills before a crowd of twenty-five hundred.²

The most important demonstration, and the one that made Pro-Rec so well-known to British Columbians, was the annual mass display staged in Vancouver each year, starting in 1935. The publicity associated with this event was sufficient to ensure that any one living in the Greater Vancouver area would know about Pro-Rec through newspaper accounts of the display, if not from actual attendance at the event itself. Extensive advance publicity, front-page newspaper reports, and numerous large photographs in the daily papers annually drew the Pro-Rec programme to the attention of the residents of the area.

¹See Appendix I for complete programme.

²*Public Schools Report*, 1937-38, p. 77.

PLATE VIII



Women Pro-Rec Members, Vancouver Mass Display, 1930's
(Eisenhardt Collection)

The first three mass displays were staged in armories in Vancouver, but by 1938, the demand for spectator seating had outgrown these facilities and the display was moved to the Vancouver Forum, in Exhibition Park. Table 10 lists the numbers of participants and spectators for the first five years, and demonstrates the rapid growth in public support of this annual event. The attendance of six thousand for 1938 was the highest recorded in Pro-Rec's history.

TABLE 10
VANCOUVER MASS DISPLAYS: PARTICIPANTS AND SPECTATORS: 1935-39¹

Year	Participants	Spectators
1935	500	(no information)
1936	600	3,000
1937	800	3,000
1938	2,000	6,000
1939	2,000	5,000

The large numbers of participants was one of the most impressive features of the Vancouver mass display. The display itself bore a marked resemblance to the mass outdoor gymnastics festivals staged in European countries at this time.² Eisenhardt was proud to claim, in 1939, that the Pro-Rec display was "on a par with those seen in the Old

¹Sources: *Public Schools Reports* and newspaper articles. Figures are estimated.

²Gerber, *op. cit.*, Part V, *passim*.

Countries."¹ All Pro-Rec centres in Vancouver and communities within commuting distance were encouraged to send as many participants as possible to the display. The more skilled members were featured in individual performances, such as gymnastic apparatus routines, but everyone was given a place in at least one routine, and the less proficient performers could find satisfaction in participating in the simple fundamental exercise routines or in one of the mass dance numbers.²

The displays were highly organized, and involved the moving of hundreds of participants in and out of the performance area, with precision timing for a two-hour programme. Each mass number was followed by a routine involving one or a few individuals, so that the pace of the show was maintained.³ Some presentations required approximately five hundred performers on the floor at one time, in mass execution of exercise routines.⁴ Only one rehearsal was held prior to the display,⁵ but most of the preparation was done in the individual centres, with all groups practising identical routines, as described in the textbook distributed at the previous summer school for instructors.⁶

The chief purpose of the display was to inform the audience of Pro-Rec activities. The 1937 programme illustrated this objective:

¹*Gymnast*, IV:8 (December, 1938), p. 13.

²Interview with Hilda Keatley, February 21st, 1976.

³Interview with Hilda Keatley, March 23rd, 1977.

⁴Woollacott, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁵Comprehensive Report, 1935-36, p. 39.

⁶"Instructors' Handbook - 1938-39", *op. cit.*, pp. 7-9.

Entrance march	- All participants
Opening address	- The Honorable George M. Weir, Minister of Education
Fundamental gymnastics	- Men - Vancouver centres
Natural dancing	- Women - Vancouver centres
Variety games	- Men - New Westminster centres
Fundamental gymnastics	- Women - Vancouver centres
Address	- The Right Honorable T.D. Pattullo, Premier of British Columbia
Mexican Hat Dance	- Women - New Westminster centres
General athletics	- Men - All centres
Folk dancing	- Women - Vancouver centres
Torch swinging	- Men - Normal School centre
Swannee River	- Women - Victoria centre
General athletics	- Women - All centres
Waltz of the Hearts	- Mixed - Chosen groups
Calisthenics	- Women - Victoria centres
Egyptian scene	- Mixed - Chosen groups
Grand march	- All participants ¹

Eisenhardt believed that the mass displays served as a medium through which Pro-Rec could show the work being carried out at the centres. He also felt that the displays corrected false impressions that the public might hold, such as the view that Pro-Rec was too militaristic.² He promoted these displays as a means of encouraging more young

¹Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Third Annual Mass Demonstration of Recreational and Physical Education", Vancouver, 1937 (Ruben Collection) (hereinafter referred to as "Mass Display Programme").

²Comprehensive Report, 1936-37, p. 27.

people to join Pro-Rec after seeing average members from centres participating in the routines.¹ The displays were also an important and satisfying experience for these participants, and gave them a stronger feeling of contributing to the group effort.² However, in the opinion of King, the public relations officer, the value of the mass displays as a means of attracting new members was open to question. In his 1938-39 report, he suggested that the more advanced routines performed by highly-skilled gymnasts actually frightened away prospective members, who felt that the intricate movements were too difficult for them. He recommended that to counteract this, simple displays, at an elementary level, be presented at centres at the start of the season, to acquaint the average man or woman with the beginning stages of gymnastics.³

Special displays were frequently presented by select groups of Pro-Rec members. One such display was in commemoration of the fifty-year Jubilee celebration of the City of Vancouver in 1936. A week-long outdoor demonstration of Pro-Rec activities was presented at Lumberman's Arch in Stanley Park, and over thirty thousand people witnessed the display of activities by one hundred performers.⁴ The five evening shows included dancing, vaulting, specialty exercise routines (illuminated Indian club swinging, "golden statues"), table tennis and fencing exhibitions, and life-saving drills. Augmenting the physical activities

¹ Interview with Ian Eisenhardt, December 12th, 1976.

² *Ibid.*

³ Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, pp. 36-37.

⁴ *Gymnast*, II:1 (November, 1936), p. 1.

were musical numbers by a small band and a singer.¹ Another important occasion in which Pro-Rec participated was the visit to Vancouver of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, in May, 1939. Five hundred Pro-Rec members performed at Hastings Park before a crowd of twelve thousand, as Their Majesties toured the park grounds.²

Smaller displays were presented before special groups from time to time. Typical of these were: a display of twenty-five gymnasts for university students in the U.B.C. auditorium, augmented by a speech by Eisenhardt, in which he urged students to utilize their gymnasium facilities more fully;³ a public display at the Strand Theatre in downtown Vancouver, supplemented by movies promoting Pro-Rec;⁴ a demonstration of remedial gymnastics for women, at the annual inaugural meeting of the Vancouver branch of the Local Council of Women;⁵ a place in the programme of the 1938 Pageant of Peace sponsored by the Greater Vancouver and New Westminster Youth Council;⁶ and a presentation by the Pro-Rec Display Troupe at a weekly meeting of the Vancouver Rotary Club.⁷

The Display-Troupe concept was frequently used to promote Pro-Rec, especially during the first few years of the programme's operation.

¹*Ibid.*, p. 3.

²*Public Schools Report*, 1939-40, p. 89.

³*Daily Province*, October 7th, 1936, p. 21.

⁴*News-Herald*, December 24th, 1937.

⁵*Vancouver Sun*, January 4th, 1938.

⁶Greater Vancouver and New Westminster Youth Council, "Pageant of Peace", printed programme, Vancouver, November 10th, 1938 (Keatley Collection).

⁷Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Pro-Rec Bulletin", Vancouver, October 23rd, 1938, p. 3 (Keatley Collection).

A special troupe was organized in 1936 for an extensive tour of Vancouver Island. Between September 7th and September 14th, the troupe travelled by bus from Port Alberni to Victoria, with demonstration stops at Qualicum, Nanaimo, Ladysmith, Chemainus, Duncan, and Saanich. An afternoon or evening performance was presented in each town, and in some instances, two performances were given. The basic programme consisted of typical Pro-Rec activities: fundamental gymnastics, tumbling and pyramids, vaulting, mat and springboard work, and dance routines.¹ The thirty-seven men and women instructors and leaders who comprised the troupe performed outdoors or in community halls before 2,674 paid spectators in the Island towns, and before another 3,253 in attendance at the Victoria Show Boat.² The tour was very successful, and achieved the desired results of advertising the Pro-Rec programme and stimulating the establishment of new centres. Mathisen stated, in his report of the tour, that:

a blazing trail of enthusiasm for our activities was left behind us as all the towns in which we performed are clamouring for the establishment of Provincial Recreation Centres and for the introduction of a similar type of physical education to the schools.³

During the 1936-37 season, seven new Island centres were established, and an additional two centres began operation in the fall of 1937.⁴

This troupe continued to present displays during the next few weeks after its return from Vancouver Island; eleven were presented in

¹Jerry Mathisen, "Tour of Vancouver Island - September 7th to the 14th/36", mimeographed report [PABC: 8.9.4 - 8.9.5 g, File Box 10-21].

²*Ibid.*

³*Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁴Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, pp. 41-65, *passim*.

Vancouver¹ and four in the Fraser Valley.² Demonstrations in towns such as Chilliwack and Port Coquitlam furthered the promotion of Pro-Rec in areas where new centres could be established, and were, in Eisenhardt's view, "a revelation to the young people who witnessed them."³

The impact of these large and small displays on the British Columbia public was extensive. During 1938-39, for example, 105 displays of the four types described in this section were presented, and were witnessed by 35,524 spectators or visitors,⁴ while an additional five thousand attended the 1939 mass display held in Vancouver.⁵ In most instances, admission was free, or for a very nominal charge, and these displays were a source of inexpensive entertainment as well as an educational experience.

Other Forms of Publicity

In their efforts to make use of every possible source of publicity, the Pro-Rec administrative staff used other media, in addition to those outlined above. The name "Pro-Rec" was an obvious publicity aid, and was the result of a contest conducted in 1937.⁶ The announcement of the outcome of this contest, in an article headed "Eisenhardt's Baby Known As Pro-Rec", appears to be the first public use of this name, and it proved to be a very successful choice. Twenty-five years after Pro-Rec

¹Comprehensive Report, 1936-37, p. 84.

²Eisenhardt Personal Report, October 22nd, 1936.

³Public Schools Report, 1936-37, p. 81.

⁴Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, pp. 74-92.

⁵Daily Province, April 22nd, 1939, p. 52.

⁶Vancouver Sun, October 7th, 1937, p. 18.

was disbanded, the name was still well-remembered in British Columbia.

Some use was made of window posters, large outdoor signs, and car stickers for special events such as the mass display.¹ Press reprints of selected newspaper articles, and an attractive brochure were also produced. Frequent personal appearances by Eisenhardt and other staff members were valuable methods of disseminating information about the programme.²

An effective promotional device was developed during the 1937-38 season when the Postmaster-General approved a special franking stamp with the words "Recreation Centres Keep You Fit". For fifteen days of each month for a six-month period, all letters leaving Vancouver were stamped with this message.³ Finally, Pro-Rec participated in one of the more popular annual Vancouver events, the parade of floats and bands through the city that highlighted the opening of the Pacific National Exhibition in late August; the entry of a float in this parade was a feature of Pro-Rec's publicity programme from its first year of operation.⁴

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL PROGRAMMES

Introduction

When Pro-Rec was inaugurated in 1934, it became the first public recreation scheme of its kind to be established in the British Empire.⁵

¹Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, p. 37.

²*Ibid.*

³Ian Eisenhardt, text of closing address to students at Pro-Rec Summer School, Vancouver, August 12th, 1938 (Eisenhardt Collection).

⁴Comprehensive Report, 1935-36, p. 2.

⁵*Public Schools Report*, 1938-39, p. 79.

More specifically, it was the first programme of physical recreation provided free of charge to the public by a senior government. The British National Fitness Council was formed in 1937,¹ and was closely followed by the creation of the New Zealand Council of Physical Welfare and Recreation.² Australia's Commonwealth Council for National Fitness was established in 1939.³ The Canadian federal government did not enact its *National Physical Fitness Act* until 1943.⁴

This 1943 creation of the National Physical Fitness Council was the continuation of an involvement of the Canadian federal government in physical fitness that started in 1937, with the passage of the *Unemployment and Agricultural Assistance Act*. That act included a section pertaining to the support of provincial physical fitness programmes.⁵ The 1939 *Youth Training Act* continued this support, with its provisions for the training of young people to fit them for gainful employment.⁶ It is not the purpose of this study to examine these federal programmes in detail, but rather to determine the significant influences of the federal schemes on Pro-Rec, and, conversely, to examine the influences that Pro-

¹H.J. Evans, *Service to Sport: The Story of the CCPR - 1935-1972*, London: Pelham Books, Ltd., 1974), p. 35.

²New Zealand, *Parliamentary Debates*, November 23rd, 1967, p. 610, as quoted in Sawula, "The National Physical Fitness Act of Canada", *op. cit.*, p. 33.

³J.O. Miller, "Physical Education in Australia", *Physical Education Around the World*, Monograph No. 2 (Indianapolis: Phi Epsilon Kappa Fraternity, 1968), p. 7.

⁴Canada, *National Physical Fitness Act*, Chapter 29, *Statutes of Canada 1943-44*, 7-8 George VI, Parts I-II, July 24th, 1943 (hereinafter referred to as N.P.F. Act).

⁵U.A.A. Act, *op. cit.*

⁶Canada, *Youth Training Act*, 1939, Chapter 35, *Statutes of Canada 1939*, 3 George VI, Parts I-II, May 19th, 1939 (hereinafter referred to as Y.T. Act).

Rec had upon the creation of the federal programmes.

Unemployment and Agricultural Assistance Act, 1937

In 1936, the National Employment Commission, headed by Arthur B. Purvis, was charged with making a thorough examination of unemployment conditions across Canada, and recommending, to the federal Department of Labour, measures to alleviate those conditions.¹ One result of this study was the provision of funds, under the *Unemployment and Agricultural Assistance Act* of 1937, for approved training and development projects for unemployed young people, through equal-cost-sharing arrangements with co-operating provincial governments.² The categories of projects were: occupational training; industrial apprenticeship courses; natural resource training and conservation work projects; and physical training projects to maintain health and morale.³

The inclusion of physical training as one category of approved projects can be credited, in large part, to Eisenhardt and the favourable nation-wide reputation of his Pro-Rec programme. The Youth Employment Committee of the Purvis Commission was chaired by Alan Chambers, of Victoria,⁴ and in August, 1936, Chambers asked Eisenhardt for information about Pro-Rec so that the British Columbia scheme could be studied for use in other provinces.⁵ In September, 1936, Eisenhardt was

¹Canada, Department of Labour, *Final Report of the National Employment Commission* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1938).

²U.A.A. Act, *op. cit.*

³Richter, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-149.

⁴Chambers subsequently became chairman of the first British Columbia Youth Hostels Committee in 1938, *Victoria Daily Times*, July 20th, 1938.

⁵Letter to Ian Eisenhardt, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, from Alan Chambers, Chairman, Youth Employment Committee, Ottawa, August 4th, 1936 [PABC: 8.9.4 - 8.9.5 g, Accounts Folder].

invited to Ottawa to meet with Chambers and others members of the Youth Employment Committee. This was followed by further hearings of the Committee in Toronto and Montreal, at which the Pro-Rec programme was explained.¹ The subsequent inclusion of physical training projects in the U.A.A. Act is attributed to the support of Chambers² and to the model of Pro-Rec as presented by Eisenhardt.

The major effects of this federal-provincial scheme on Pro-Rec were financial and administrative. The programme, referred to as the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Programme, offered \$10,000 to British Columbia for physical training projects, and this was to be matched by an equal amount from the province, to cover costs of instructors and equipment for unemployed young people.³ In actuality, the Dominion contribution that first year was only \$8,000 and the province provided \$12,000, but for the following years, both governments contributed \$16,500.⁴ These grants enabled Pro-Rec to establish more centres, hire more instructors, and purchase more equipment. The total appropriation to Pro-Rec for 1938-39 was \$75,645.55, compared to the pre-Youth Training Programme grant of \$30,032.62,⁵ an increase over two years of approximately 150 per cent.

The federal regulations associated with the implementation of the scheme were typically time-consuming and often frustrating, and British

¹ Comprehensive Report, 1936-37, p. 96.

² *Vancouver Sun*, April 2nd, 1938, p. 1.

³ Letter to R.F. Thompson, Supervisor of Youth Training, Department of Labour, Ottawa, from Ian Eisenhardt, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, October 8th, 1937 [PAC: RG27/697/Y12-1-8 (1)].

⁴ Figures are approximate. See Appendix E.

⁵ See Table 8, *supra*, p. 151.

Columbia requested modification in some areas during the first year of the dominion-provincial agreement. The B.C. request to raise the age limit from thirty years to thirty-five years was approved by Ottawa, because it was felt that the older age group would benefit considerably from the programme;¹ but an attempt to eliminate the registration of unemployed members, always a problem with Pro-Rec, was not resolved. Nor was Weir's request for a blanket appropriation supported by federal authorities.² Employed and unemployed were accommodated together in Pro-Rec centres, and it was necessary for instructors to indicate the status of members on the registration rolls. The federal Department of Labour also wanted equal recognition in all publicity releases, and this tended to alter the political promotion of Pro-Rec to some extent.³ Clearly, the previously established Pro-Rec administrative structure did not easily adjust to the new federal restrictions.

Youth Training Act, 1939

For two years, Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Programmes were funded under the authority of the U.A.A. Act. Then, in 1939, the *Youth Training Act* was passed, and became the authorizing legislation for shared funding of physical training projects, with the purpose of training young people to fit them for gainful employment. Physical fitness

¹Memorandum to N.M. Rogers, Minister of Labour, Ottawa, from R.F. Thompson, Supervisor of Youth Training, Department of Labour, Ottawa, February 7th, 1938; see also reply to Thompson from Rogers, February 21st, 1938 [PAC: RG27/697/Y12-1-8 (1)].

²Letter to N.M. Rogers, Minister of Labour, Ottawa, from George M. Weir, Minister of Education, Victoria, June, 1939 [PAC: RG27/697/Y12-1-8 (2)].

³Letter to George Pearson, Minister of Labour, Victoria, from N.M. Rogers, Minister of Labour, Ottawa, March 7th, 1938 [RG 27/697/Y12-1-8 (1)].

was considered an important element in this training scheme and specific provision was made for recreational activities.¹

Again, as with the previous federal programme, some credit for inclusion of physical fitness in the 1939 *Y.T. Act* must be given to Eisenhardt and Pro-Rec. His presentation of a Pro-Rec film and his explanation of the British Columbia scheme at the Youth Training Conference held in Ottawa in January, 1939, were instrumental in the later adoption of a resolution, by the Conference, that provinces consider the establishment of physical training programmes.² To the extent that the resolutions of this conference were given serious consideration in the drafting of the *Y.T. Act*, it may be assumed that federal authorities supported the establishment of schemes in all provinces similar to that conducted in B.C. Although the new act did not become law until May, 1939, Eisenhardt was able to announce, on his return from the January conference in Ottawa, that "we have a three-year plan for our rehabilitation work."³

As Pro-Rec moved into its wartime phase, the effects of the 1939 *Y.T. Act* upon it were not significantly different from that of the previous legislation. Funds for the first year of this three-year programme were \$19,000,⁴ an increase of \$3,500 over the 1938-39 grant, but administrative regulations were not changed, and, for all practical purposes, the dominion-provincial arrangements continued as they had under the *U.A.A. Act*.

¹ Thomas West, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

² *Labour Gazette*, February, 1939, p. 152.

³ *Daily Province*, January 26th, 1939, p. 2.

⁴ See Appendix E.

Alberta Health and Recreation Programme

In 1938, with the support of federal funds provided through the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Programme, the Province of Alberta launched a recreation programme modelled after British Columbia's Pro-Rec.¹ Officials in Alberta had been observing the B.C. programme for some time,² and the Alberta premier, William Aberhart, wrote to Weir, asking for the consultant services of Eisenhardt.³ This request for Eisenhardt's services may have been the result of a suggestion put forward by R.G. Thompson, Supervisor of Youth Training, Federal Department of Labour. A memo from Thompson to an accountant contained the following statement:

In order to assist [Alberta] in its organization and set-up, I suggested obtaining the benefit of the advice and experience of Mr. Eisenhardt from Vancouver.⁴

Eisenhardt visited Edmonton and Calgary for four days in June, 1938, conferring with representatives of public agencies and private organizations interested in recreation.⁵ Two Alberta government officials then travelled to Vancouver in July, and observed the Pro-Rec Summer School in session.⁶ Premier Aberhart also visited the Vancouver Summer School,

¹ Alberta, Department of Education, *Annual Report*, 1938, p. 11.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Daily Province*, May 11th, 1938, p. 22.

⁴ Letter to F.W. Stremes, Chief Audit Accountant, Ottawa, from R.F. Thompson, Supervisor of Youth Training, Department of Labour, Ottawa, July 11th, 1938 [PAC: RG27/696/Y12-1-7-Part 2].

⁵ Letter to R.F. Thompson, Supervisor of Youth Training, Ottawa, from G.F. McNally, Deputy Minister of Education, Edmonton, July 7th, 1938 [PAC: RG27/Acc. No. 71/210/Y12-1-7, Sec. 2, Box 8].

⁶ Letter to Thompson from McNally, July 15th, 1938 [PAC: RG27/Acc. No. 71/210/Y12-1-7, Sec. 2, Box 8].

toward the end of that same month.¹

With these contacts, plans were made for the loan of Pro-Rec staff members to the Alberta government, to conduct a preliminary survey for the establishment of centres throughout that province, and to instruct at the new Alberta recreation leadership training course.² The survey was conducted, during the first two weeks of August, by Thomas Ruben, chief instructor for Pro-Rec centres in the Fraser Valley.³ He toured the province with Joseph Ross, organizer of the Alberta programme, explaining the purpose of the planned programme, and encouraging communities to send young people to the leadership course.⁴

As a result of this preliminary work by Ruben and Ross, thirty-six men and twenty women were selected to attend the three-week Alberta summer school in Edmonton, starting August 15th.⁵ The instructors for this course, loaned to Alberta by Pro-Rec, were: Ruben, Jerry Mathisen, provincial chief instructor, Hilda Keatley, chief instructress for Vancouver, and Francis Borde, a Victoria instructress. Classes throughout the province began in October, and during the first year of operation thirty-one centres were opened, with a registration of more than sixty-five hundred members.⁶

The second Alberta leadership course was held in the summer of

¹Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, p. 174.

²Letter to Thompson from McNally, July 15th, 1938, *op. cit.*

³*News-Herald*, August 15th, 1938, p. 11.

⁴Interview with Thomas Ruben, May 25th, 1977.

⁵*Edmonton Journal*, August 16th, 1938.

⁶Alberta, Department of Education, *Annual Report*, 1938, p. 11.

1939, in Calgary. Again, four Pro-Rec instructors, led by Ruben, presented the course, using the Pro-Rec textbook as the basis for instructional material.¹ Phyllis Sanderson, chief instructress for the Okanagan Valley and one of the Calgary course staff members, was invited to stay on in Alberta as provincial women's supervisor. She remained with the Alberta programme for three years before enlisting in the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service in 1942.²

Although Pro-Rec influence in Alberta was significant during these formative years, the Alberta programme did not develop in the same manner as that in British Columbia. Where Pro-Rec established and operated its programme from its head office, Alberta's provincial activities were primarily concerned with the training of leaders and the provision of consulting and advising services in the form of travelling provincial supervisors. Communities were given more responsibility for the establishment of centres, programmes differed from centre to centre, and the presentation of displays was not an important feature.³ Instructors in the Alberta militia also studied the Pro-Rec programme, and as a result began to include rhythmical activities in the training programme for militia men in Edmonton and Calgary in September, 1938.⁴

Saskatchewan Youth Training Programme

In the summer of 1939, the Province of Saskatchewan initiated a physical training project under the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training

¹ *Official Textbook: 1939, op. cit.*

² Interview with Phyllis Sanderson, May 24th, 1977.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Gymnast*, IV:6 (October, 1938), pp. 9, 11.

Programme, and made use of Pro-Rec instructors from British Columbia in much the same manner as did Alberta.¹ For the first summer school, held in July in Saskatoon, two B.C. instructors, Catherine Horn and Harry Gordon-Cooper, conducted the course, under the auspices of the Saskatchewan Department of Education.² The Pro-Rec textbook was used for this four-week course,³ in which twenty-seven women and thirty-eight men were enrolled.⁴ The programme in Saskatchewan was similar to that in Alberta, with the provincial government training and paying for instructors, while communities were responsible for organizing centres; programmes varied from centre to centre.⁵

Manitoba Community Youth Programme

Although less direct than the assistance given to Alberta and Saskatchewan, Pro-Rec appears to have had some influence in the establishment of the physical training programme in Manitoba.⁶ Recreational training was begun in Winnipeg in November, 1938, when Robert Jarman directed a selected group in a five-week leadership programme. Following this, experimental centres were opened in twelve Manitoba towns. Meanwhile, Ivan Schultz, the Minister of Education for Manitoba, visited Vancouver in December, 1938, to confer with Pro-Rec officials and to

¹Canadian Physical Education Association, *Bulletin*, VII:6 (May, 1940), p. 1.

²*Vancouver Sun*, June 29th, 1939, p. 13.

³*Official Textbook: 1939, op. cit.*

⁴Canadian Physical Education Association, *Bulletin*, loc. cit.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶Manitoba, Department of Education, *Annual Report*, 1938-39, p. 20.

observe Pro-Rec centres in action.¹ In a newspaper interview, he stated that:

We in Manitoba have been keeping an eye on British Columbia's health plan for the past two years I believe that your province has set the pace for a movement that will eventually be Dominion-wide.²

Subsequent to this visit, films of Pro-Rec activities were sent to Manitoba for screening by officials there.³ In July, 1939, the first Manitoba Leadership Training Camp was held at Gimli.⁴

SPECIAL FEATURES

Pro-Rec and Other Organizations

Although Pro-Rec, as a branch of a provincial department, was able to establish its programme and meet its objectives independently of other agencies, there were a number of organizations with which special relationships were established, either regularly or on an *ad hoc* basis. One such organization was the B.C. Youth Hostel Committee, described in an earlier section.

Amateur Athletic Union of Canada. Pro-Rec found it necessary to work closely with the B.C. section of the Amateur Athletic Union of Canada, to ensure that official sanction was granted for activities in those sports controlled by the A.A.U. of C.⁵ In the early years of Pro-Rec's

¹ Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, p. 178.

² *Daily Province*, December 5th, 1938, p. 11.

³ Ian Eisenhardt, *Canada's Democratic Youth Movement, 1939*, collection of speeches and articles (Eisenhardt Collection).

⁴ Manitoba Department of Education, *Annual Report, 1938-39*, p. 11.

⁵ Letter to J. Lynes, Pro-Rec Instructor, Kelowna, from E. Martin, Pro-Rec Registrar, Vancouver, January 30th, 1939 [PABC: 8.8.5 a, Box 34].

programme, the relationship between these two agencies was not one of complete co-operation, for the Pro-Rec administrative staff apparently did not fully appreciate the stringency of A.A.U. rules or the power that this organization had with its amateur sports. During the 1936-37 season, for example, Pro-Rec did not apply for sanction of its inter-centre boxing, weightlifting, and gymnastics championships. As a result, a number of penalties were incurred: Pro-Rec boxers were outlawed when they applied for amateur cards; the attempt by Mathisen to make the Pro-Rec weightlifting competition a provincial championship was thwarted when the A.A.U. stated that any non-Pro-Rec member participating in this competition would be barred from amateur sport; and the Pro-Rec gymnastics team was ineligible for the provincial championships.¹ Eisenhardt criticized the attitude of the A.A.U. of C, and the severity of its penalties against Pro-Rec members who had taken part in non-sanctioned inter-centre competitions. He recommended:

. . . that the Department of Education, in some way or other, draw to the attention of the Amateur Union the fact that no other agency is doing more than [Pro-Rec] is to create an interest and a love for sport and fair play, and that this Union should endeavour to cooperate with rather than to hinder the work being carried out by the Department.²

Eisenhardt also felt that the affiliation fee demanded by the A.A.U. of C., although only twenty-five cents, was too much for some members of Pro-Rec, especially those who were unemployed and who had little or no money.³

By 1939, relations between Pro-Rec and the B.C. section of the A.A.U. of C. had improved considerably; Pro-Rec instructors were given

¹ Comprehensive Report, 1936-37, pp. 35-36.

² *Ibid.*, p. 36.

³ Interview with Ian Eisenhardt, December 12th, 1976.

specific directives on the procedures for obtaining sanction for competitions, and in some areas, Pro-Rec centres were the only groups permitted to stage an event for an A.A.U.-controlled sport.¹ Even this situation was tenuous, however, for the Pro-Rec registrar found it necessary to warn a particular instructor not to cross the A.A.U., because it had taken Pro-Rec three years to become affiliated with the Union.²

Canadian Physical Education Association. The Canadian Physical Education Association (C.P.E.A.) was formed in 1933, and a number of educators and recreation leaders in British Columbia joined this national association.³ By 1937, these members were able to form the B.C. Branch of the C.P.E.A. and it was formally launched in March of that year.⁴ Pro-Rec members played an active role in the creation and administration of the provincial branch. Preliminary correspondence between Eisenhardt and A.S. Lamb, President of the C.P.E.A., facilitated the establishment of the new branch,⁵ and Eisenhardt, together with Mathisen, and Gertrude Moore of the Y.W.C.A., formed a committee to expedite its formation.⁶ The Pro-Rec head office was frequently used for meetings of the branch,⁷ and Eisenhardt served on the provincial executive, as Vice-President for

¹ Letter to Lynes from Martin, *op. cit.*

² Letter to Lynes from Martin, January 17th, 1939 [PABC: 8.8.5 a, Box 34].

³ *Gymnast*, II:4 (February, 1937), pp. 1, 6.

⁴ Canadian Physical Education Association, *Bulletin*, V.3 (February, 1938), p. 1.

⁵ Comprehensive Report, 1936-37, p. 6.

⁶ *Daily Colonist*, January 9th, 1937, p. 6.

⁷ Comprehensive Report, 1936-37, p. 103.

the first year, and then as President for two years.¹ Ernie Grant, a Vancouver Pro-Rec instructor, was B.C. Treasurer.² In December, 1937, the B.C. branch held a one-day convention, at which a display of Pro-Rec work was one of the principal events.³ Three Pro-Rec supervisors were among the speakers at this convention.⁴

One of the highlights of this period, for both the B.C. branch and for Pro-Rec, was the fourth annual convention of the C.P.E.A., held in Vancouver in June, 1939. Many demonstrations and displays were included in the convention programme, presented by groups from Vancouver schools, the Y.M.C.A., and the Y.W.C.A. A number of Pro-Rec displays and visits were also featured, and the topic of one General Assembly was "The Program of Adult Physical Education".⁵ Members had been urged to attend the convention in Vancouver because it offered "a rare opportunity to see . . . the most outstanding development in public recreation" ever witnessed in Canada;⁶ this was in reference to Pro-Rec.

Many of the resolutions passed by the convention reflected the influence of Eisenhardt and Pro-Rec. This may be inferred in the proposals:

¹Comprehensive Report, 1936-37, p. 7; see also Canadian Physical Education Association, *Bulletin*, V:3 (February, 1938), p. 2; *Bulletin* VI:4 (March, 1939), p. 1.

²Canadian Physical Education Association, *Bulletin*, V:3 (February, 1938), p. 6.

³*Gymnast*, III:3 (December, 1937), p. 1.

⁴Canadian Physical Education Association, *Bulletin*, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

⁵Canadian Physical Education Association, "Programme: 1939 Convention of the Canadian Physical Education Association, June 19th to 22nd, Vancouver, B.C.", printed programme (Keatley Collection).

⁶Canadian Physical Education Association, *Bulletin*, VI:4 (March, 1939), p. 2.

that gymnastics be included in the British Empire Games; that a National Fitness programme be initiated; that the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Programme (Physical Education) be open to all Canadian youth out of school; and that school boards provide facilities at cost for Dominion-Provincial Youth Training projects.¹

The week of June 19th to 24th, covering the time of the C.P.E.A. convention, was declared "Physical Fitness Week" by the City of Vancouver.² This was an indication of the popularity of Pro-Rec, and of its success in bringing the matter of physical fitness to the attention of the public. In a newspaper editorial discussing Physical Fitness Week, it was stated that:

This city and this province are thoroughly convinced of the importance of physical education. The wide response to instruction already given proves that amply. It should be a matter of pride to this community that from our provincial efforts is growing a movement nation-wide in scope.³

SUMMARY

With the closing of the 1938-39 winter season, Pro-Rec reached the zenith of its growth and development, although this condition would not be recognized for many years to come. In five years, the programme of adult physical recreation expanded from nineteen centres, in the Lower Mainland and on Vancouver Island, to 135 centres spread throughout many parts of the province. During that time, membership for the winter season grew from 2,768 to 23,786. The Pro-Rec staff, numbering only

¹Canadian Physical Education Association, *Bulletin*, VII:1 (September, 1939), p. 2.

²*News-Herald*, June 5th, 1939, p. 12.

³*Vancouver Sun*, June 19th, 1938, p. 4.

thirty-seven in its first year,¹ tripled to 119 by 1938-39.²

The programme, based upon Danish and Swedish gymnastics and Keep Fit exercises, also included sports and dancing, and special groups were organized to provide activities such as cricket, soccer, swimming, field hockey, track and field, and tennis. Social events were also included, and at each centre, a committee of members conducted these special events. The annual display highlighted the close of each season, and the Mass Display in Vancouver was a popular demonstration of Pro-Rec activities. Many sports and recreational activities benefited from the Pro-Rec programme. Youth hostelling was initiated and administered by Pro-Rec personnel, and cricket received particularly strong support from Pro-Rec. Gymnastics was firmly established as a competitive sport in B.C. because of Pro-Rec emphasis on this activity.

Much of the success of Pro-Rec during this initial phase was due to the enthusiastic leadership of the Director, Ian Eisenhardt, and his chief assistants, Jerry Mathisen, Hilda Keatley, and Paul King. The programme became well-known outside of B.C., and served as a stimulus for federal aid through the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Programme. This, in turn, provided other provinces with sufficient funds to establish their own programmes, and some, notably Alberta and Saskatchewan, implemented aspects of the Pro-Rec programme in their schemes.

Pro-Rec attracted the attention of education and recreation authorities in other countries. American youth leaders praised the programme,³ and the Director of Education for New South Wales, Australia;

¹ Comprehensive Report, 1935-36, p. 9.

² Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, pp. 169-171.

³ *Vancouver Sun*, June 16th, 1938, p. 3.

visited Vancouver, inspected the programme, and commended it highly.¹ He invited Eisenhardt to go to Sydney, N.S.W., to establish a similar programme there, but Eisenhardt declined the offer.²

After the outbreak of World War II, the Pro-Rec programme would be profoundly affected. However, it had become well-established during the latter half of the 1930's, and would continue to provide free physical recreation for men and women of all ages throughout the province.

¹ *Vancouver Sun*, August 6th, 1938, p. 16.

² Interview with Ian Eisenhardt, December 13th, 1976.

CHAPTER IV

PRO-REC DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR: 1939 TO 1945

When Canada went to war against Germany, on September 10th, 1939, the country was at a low ebb, and in a state of half-hearted unity. The Depression had taken a great toll, both economically and psychologically, and many Canadians were not convinced that this was necessary.¹ In addition, memories of the "Fourteen-Eighteen War" were still vivid in the minds of an entire generation, especially those bitter French-Canadians who felt that they had been betrayed by the conscription act of 1917. In September, 1939, one of the most important tasks facing the country's leaders was the need to instill in all Canadians a strong sense of patriotism, duty to "King and Country", and the willingness to sacrifice. This seemed difficult at first, during the nine months of the "phoney war", but when France and Belgium fell in June, 1940, and British troops were evacuated from Dunkirk, English-speaking Canada was galvanized into action and became Britain's ranking ally. As Granatstein stated:

Men and women enlisted in the hundreds of thousands, the factories boomed, and war production soared. The war truly became Canada's War, and the nation's pride and fate became identified with the battle in a fashion that all the propagandists of 1939 had been unable to make real.²

¹J.L. Granatstein, *Canada's War: The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939-1945* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. vi., 20.

²*Ibid.*, p. vi.

In British Columbia, the war seemed very remote, until December 7th, 1941, when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, Hong Kong, the Phillipines, and other strategic bases, in attacks that caught the Allies completely by surprise. With the possibility of enemy attack a constant threat, British Columbians established Air Raid Protection units, engaged in blackout practices, and deported all residents of Japanese origin to the Interior of the province or beyond the Rockies.¹ A few hostile acts were launched against B.C. by the Japanese early in the War. The lighthouse at Estevan Point on Vancouver Island was shelled by a Japanese submarine, and Japanese troops occupied two of the American Aleutian Islands off the coast of Alaska.² Also, ingenious fire bombs, carried by balloons and high winds across the Pacific, found their way to B.C., fortunately unsuccessful in their purpose of starting major forest fires.³ British Columbians established a number of wartime organizations, one of the most interesting of which was the Pacific Coast Militia Rangers. Composed of miners, trappers, woodsmen, loggers, and forest rangers scattered throughout the province, the P.C.M.R. provided a body of irregulars accustomed to the extremes in climate and terrain, who could be called out for local defence in the event of invasion by the enemy; this force eventually numbered approximately fifteen thousand officers and men.⁴

¹Reginald H. Roy, *For Most Conspicuous Bravery: A Biography of Major-General George R. Pearkes, V.C., Through Two World Wars* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1977), pp. 176-178.

²*Ibid.*, p. 173.

³Barry Broadfoot, *Six War Years 1939-1945: Memories of Canadians at Home and Abroad* (Don Mills, Ontario: General Publishing Company Limited, 1976), p. 48.

⁴Roy, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-178.

British Columbia also became "overwhelmingly Canadian in sentiment",¹ and discarded much of the parochialism that had typified its political stance during the 1930's. In 1941, a Coalition government was formed, composed of Liberals and Conservatives, and Premier Pattullo was replaced by John Hart. Pattullo's ouster was attributed, in part, to his refusal to co-operate federally at the 1940 conference on Dominion-Provincial relations,² an attitude that was no longer acceptable in a province fully committed to fighting Canada's War.

Conscription was one of the most important political issues in Canada, throughout the entire six years of the War. The federal Liberal government of W.L. Mackenzie King had promised, in 1939, that no Canadian would be conscripted for overseas service, and until 1942, this was the declared policy of the Government. In that year, in a national plebiscite, seventy-two per cent of Quebec voters said "no", while eighty per cent of English-speaking Canadians said "yes", on the question of releasing the government from its no-conscription pledge. This demonstrated the same division of the country that had been seen in 1917, and revealed the resentment of many French-Canadians who felt that they were again being forced to fight a British war. Mackenzie King was able to delay the implementation of conscription until the autumn of 1944, when Canadian army losses in France necessitated a massive infusion of conscription replacements.³

Canada's war effort was outstanding, given the population of the

¹Ormsby, *British Columbia: A History*, op. cit., p. 478.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 470-477.

³Kenneth McNaught, *The Pelican History of Canada* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Limited, 1969), pp. 266-267.

country. Starting slowly, with an economy still suffering from the Depression, production of munitions, automotive equipment, ships, and airplanes eventually reached significant proportions. Farm, dairy, and fish products were also supplied to Britain in large quantities by Canadian producers. One of the most important contributions made by Canada was the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, in which over 130,000 air-crew personnel were trained at Canadian stations, comprising approximately eighty per cent of all Commonwealth men flying anywhere in the world.¹ Finally, over forty-one thousand Canadians gave their lives in Hong Kong, Dieppe, Sicily, Normandy and many other sites of ground battle; in the naval defence of North Atlantic convoys against German submarines and bombers; and in the air battles fought over Britain and Germany. In Bomber Command alone, more than ten thousand Royal Canadian Air Force personnel were lost.²

For most of these six years, the War was uppermost in the minds of the majority of Canadian adults — young and old. Even if a family was not directly affected by having a member in the armed services or at work in any essential wartime industry, the effects of rationing and shortages touched everyone's lives. Most people benefited financially from the War, for if it had no other virtue, it at least lifted Canada from the depths of economic depression. And although the War was a tragedy of unparalleled dimensions, and its aftermath a continuation of horrors, it was for some Canadians, in a perverse way, the best and the most exciting time of their lives.³

¹Broadfoot, *op. cit.*, p. xi.

²*Ibid.*, p. 259.

³*Ibid.*, *passim*.

The effects of the War on the Pro-Rec programme were as deeply felt as in most parts of society. Serious dislocations were experienced, and significant adjustments were made in most phases of the programme. By the end of the War, Pro-Rec was beginning to feel the effects of six years of disruption, and would never regain its pre-war status. This chapter discusses the effects of the Second World War on Pro-Rec, the manner in which the programme responded to wartime demands, and the special developments of this time period. As with the previous stage, the years from mid-1939 to mid-1945 are assumed to possess a certain unity, characterized by the features of a wartime society.

GENERAL DEVELOPMENTS

Introduction

One of the most widely-publicized Pro-Rec statistics during the '30's was the annual registration figure, and this steadily increased to an all-time high point, in 1938-39, of 26,831.¹ The registration for the War years, as presented in Table 11, showed a decline in enrollment from the pre-war period, although Eisenhardt claimed that this was, in actual fact, not the case.² However, it can be seen that during the six years

¹*Supra*, p. 79, table 2.

²In 1940, Eisenhardt reported that a new system of registration accounting had been instituted during 1939-40, a system that eliminated the practice of carrying certain numbers on the registration rolls from one year to the next. This older practice had produced an inflated registration total that was not absolutely correct. Eisenhardt stated that this double registration varied from five thousand to ten thousand, and that the total registration for 1939-40, given at 21,183 was correct, and was also the highest of any year since Pro-Rec started; see *Public Schools Report*, 1939-40, p. 89. It is not possible, with the information now available, to determine the exact registrations for the first five years, assuming Eisenhardt's statement to be correct. Therefore the figures given in Table 2 (*supra*, p. 79) must be assumed to represent some unknown amount in excess of the actual registration.

TABLE 11
SEASONAL REGISTRATIONS: 1938-39 TO 1944-45¹

Year	Summer	Winter	Total
1938-39	3,045	23,786	26,831
1939-40	n/a	n/a	21,183
1940-41	7,048	12,494	19,542
1941-42	4,118	9,174	13,292
1942-43	2,118	7,837	9,955
1943-44	2,577	8,860	11,437
1944-45	3,348	15,794	19,142

of the War, enrollment decreased, and then increased, with 1942-43 the low point in registration figures; this low enrollment of 9,955 members represented only thirty-five per cent of the pre-war high registration. Later discussions concerning the influx of junior members will demonstrate why the numbers rose after 1942-43. The decreasing enrollment during the first four years of the War can be attributed to three causes. The first was the enlistment of male members in the armed services,² and the second was the general diminishing of the unemployment situation that had been the original reason for establishing the Pro-Rec programme. The third cause was the extensive employment of women, both in war industries and in many facets of business life where manpower shortages necessitated the inclusion of women in the work force. The drastic change in the lives of

¹See Appendix D.
²"Mass Display Programme", 1942, p. 5.

women thus employed probably meant that they no longer had the time, the energy, or the inclination to attend Pro-Rec classes. Table 12 illustrates the enrollment by sex for the War years, as well as for the last year of the Depression.

TABLE 12
REGISTRATIONS FOR MEN AND WOMEN: 1938-39 TO 1944-45¹

Year	Men	Women	Total
1938-39	9,827	17,004	26,831
1939-40	n/a	n/a	21,183
1940-41	6,829	12,713	19,542
1941-42	4,257	9,035	13,292
1942-43	4,456	5,499	9,955
1943-44	4,927	6,510	11,437
1944-45	8,424	10,718	19,142

The first three years of the War saw a drastic decrease in men's enrollment in Pro-Rec, and prompted the comment, for the 1941 Mass Display, that the "majority of the participants this year will be young women, for the armed forces have taken hundreds of the men who formerly took part."² Beginning in 1940-41 women's enrollment started to decrease, and proportionately surpassed the decrease for men, with 1942-43 as the low point. This may have been the result of increases in war plant

¹See Appendix D.
²*Daily Province*, April 12th, 1941, p. 17.

production and the use of women as war workers. For instance, the first women started work in the Vancouver shipyards in September, 1942.¹

One further comparison can be made with respect to registration figures during the War, and this is the relative stability of summer enrollments (see Table 11). Although these also decreased to a low point of 1942-43, the proportionate decrease is insignificant, compared to decreases in winter enrollment. No reference has been found to the reasons for this difference, but certain assumptions can be made from the nature of the summer programme. Firstly, it was centered largely around the metropolitan areas, and primarily in Vancouver; secondly, the programme was based upon sport activities, rather than gymnastics. It is probable, therefore, that the Pro-Rec summer sports programme attracted a Vancouver clientele that normally participated in these traditional summer activities; also, this clientele could be found in Vancouver in any situation — depression, wartime, or peace time. Finally, participants could always be found for summer team and individual sports, and the numbers wanting to participate probably exceeded the availability of facilities.

Centres

The numbers of centres also fluctuated widely during the War years, with decreases during the first two years, and significant increases toward the end of the War. Table 13 lists, from available information, the numbers of centres in operation during this time. The large decrease in centres from 1938-39 to 1940-41 can be attributed in large part to the decrease in funds early in the War and the loss of instructors to

¹*The Urban Reader* (Vancouver), IV:1 (January/February, 1976), p.12.

war-related activities.

TABLE 13
NUMBERS OF PRO-REC CENTRES: 1938-39 TO 1944-45¹

Year	Summer Centres	Winter Centres	Total
1938-39	39 (1938)	135	174
1939-40	--	---	156
1940-41	23 (1940)	94	117
1941-42	45 (1941)	131	176
1942-43	--	---	141(est.) ²
1943-44	52 (1943)	196	248
1944-45	51 (1944)	198	249

The location and organization of most Pro-Rec centres remained much the same as they had been before the War started. Classes were conducted, usually twice each week, in community and church halls, and in school gymnasiums. The programme usually ran from October to March, and classes for men and women were held separately. A curtailment of funds resulted in several Pro-Rec centres being closed in the early years of the War,³ but this was reversed later, when more federal and provincial funds became available.

¹See Appendix D.

²The *Public Schools Report* for 1942-43 did not list the number of centres in operation that year. The figure given is an estimate, extrapolated from the previous years, and using registration and attendance figures.

³Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Instructors' Handbook - 1940-41" (mimeographed), p. 1. (Eisenhardt Collection).

It was noted in a 1941 newspaper article that the Pro-Rec centres still made an important contribution to the social life of Vancouver's poorer East End, where people without benefit of clubs and without the price of admission to movie shows were able to meet socially and form friendships.¹

A number of interesting new centres opened during the War years, although not directly related to the special wartime programme of Pro-Rec. First mentioned in the annual report of 1942-43, classes for boys and girls were held at St. Mary's Indian School at Mission City in the Fraser Valley.² The classes were deeply appreciated by both students and staff, and an exceptionally fine gymnastics troupe was developed by Thomas Ruben, Fraser Valley supervisor.³ Classes were conducted in Indian schools in other parts of the province, and it was hoped that some of the Indian students, upon graduation from school and after receiving Pro-Rec leadership education, would return to their villages as recreation leaders.⁴

Another new kind of centre was that established at Oakalla Prison Farm in Burnaby, in November, 1944. This was the first such programme in Canada, and the prison farm administration noticed a vast improvement in the attitudes of those who participated. A "Star" class from this group demonstrated their skills for the National Council on Physical Fitness when it met in Vancouver in the spring of 1945.⁵ A Pro-Rec instructor

¹*Vancouver Sun*, April 12th, 1941, magazine section, p. 14.

²*Public Schools Report*, 1942-43, p. 110.

³Interview with Thomas Ruben, May 25th, 1977.

⁴*Daily Province*, September 1st, 1943, p. 10.

⁵*Daily Province*, April 11th, 1945, p. 14.

also met with women inmates of Oakalla, providing square dancing, basketball, and softball at weekly sessions.¹ Additional classes in physical training and leadership training were held at the Girls' Industrial School in Vancouver.²

In 1940, the Dominion Society for Disabled Adults proposed a special programme of rehabilitation for the physically handicapped, to be operated by Pro-Rec, in co-operation with the Workmen's Compensation Board.³ This programme was not inaugurated until the 1944-45 season,⁴ and was conducted by Jerry Mathisen, at the Workmen's Compensation Clinic in Vancouver.⁵

Membership

The eligibility rules for Pro-Rec membership did not change for the first four years of the War. Any man or woman, sixteen years and over, was eligible, and in some areas, younger members were permitted to join. Junior classes could be held under the following conditions:

In rural districts and in such isolated places where the entire family might express a desire to attend the Centre's classes, exceptions to the age ruling may be made, and the children permitted to take active part in the Centre's activities. In such instances, however, the children's classes must be held separately from, and previous to, the adult sessions.⁶

¹Interview with Grace Walton, May 30th, 1977.

²Canada, Department of National Health and Welfare, Physical Fitness Division, "National Council of Physical Fitness Annual Report - 1944-45" (mimeographed), p. 60.

³*Daily Province*, May 31st, 1940, p. 14.

⁴*Public Schools Report*, 1944-45, p. 138.

⁵Council for the Guidance of Handicapped, information flyer, n/d [PAC: RG 29/826/214-1-9(1)].

⁶"Instructors' Handbook - 1940-41", *op. cit.*, p. 3.

It was also possible to provide Junior Pro-Rec centres "in response to requests from school principals, school boards or some other responsible service club or group."¹ In July, 1943, the official age limit was lowered by one year to include fifteen-year-olds not attending school, as a measure to help curb juvenile delinquency. This change was the result of efforts on the part of the Parent Teacher Association.²

The 1941-42 season saw the implementation of a new policy, designed to raise additional funds for the programme. A membership fee of fifty cents was charged at the time of registration, for which the new Pro-Rec membership pin was presented. Discretion was exercised in the enforcement of this policy, and no one was barred from the programme for inability to pay the fee.³

As discussed in a previous section, the enlistment of young men in the armed forces had a drastic effect on the Pro-Rec membership. Numbers decreased markedly during the first few years, and the Victoria men's programme was noticeably curtailed by the loss of instructors. The 1942 final display in that city was presented entirely by women,⁴ and by 1942-43, there were no men's centres operating in Victoria.⁵ Vancouver centres were similarly affected; in the 1941 Mass Display, participation by men had decreased noticeably, and in the 1942 Display programme, it was noted that "today Pro-Rec classes are peopled mostly by women, and

¹Canada, Department of National Health and Welfare, National Council on Physical Fitness, *Bulletin No. 2* (Ottawa: The King's Printer, 1945), p. 31.

²*Daily Province*, July 13th, 1943, p. 2.

³*Public Schools Report*, 1941-42, p. 99.

⁴*Daily Colonist*, March 28th, 1942, p. 3.

⁵*Public Schools Report*, 1942-43, p. 109.

boys and men either of pre or post-military age."¹

Although there was a significant decrease in enrollment for women, it was not as great as for men in the early years of the War (see Table 12). During the 1940-41 season, registration for women was actually greater than expected, especially in the cities.² Women were perceived as being able to shut the door of the Pro-Rec centre on their problems, and to lose themselves in the atmosphere of the evening's programme of activities.³ Conscientious women members sometimes went to remarkable lengths to attend their Pro-Rec classes, in spite of transportation problems; such was the woman who rowed her twelve-foot skiff across Burrard Inlet twice a week, or the schoolgirl who peddled her bicycle from Coquitlam to Vancouver, a distance of ten miles.⁴

During the 1943-44 season, following four years of declining membership, registration numbers began to increase noticeably. This was caused, in large part, by the decision to lower the membership age limit to fifteen years. When the *Youth Training Act* expired in 1942, it was temporarily replaced by the *Vocational Training Co-ordination Act*, and the restriction on participants under sixteen years of age was removed.⁵ The 1943-44 enrollment of juniors was almost three times that for the previous year,⁶ and junior classes were conducted in thirty-two Pro-Rec

¹"Mass Display Programme", 1942, p. 5.

²*Public Schools Report*, 1940-41, p. 99.

³*Vancouver Sun*, January 11, 1941, magazine section, p. 11.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵*Public Schools Report*, 1942-43, p. 108.

⁶*Public Schools Reports*, 1942-43, p. 111 (junior enrollment: 890); 1943-44, p. 128 (junior enrollment: 2562).

centres throughout the province.¹ These centres were only presented upon specific request from a responsible organization such as a school board or a service club.²

When the 1943 *National Physical Fitness Act* became the funding authority for dominion financial support of provincial recreation programmes, the age limit on membership was eliminated completely, because this Act was introduced to encourage physical recreation for Canadians of all ages.³ With the start of the 1944-45 season, Pro-Rec presented classes for children ages nine to fourteen,⁴ and juniors became a regular segment of the Pro-Rec membership rather than an exceptional group organized only by special request.

It was during the War that the social problem of juvenile delinquency developed to proportions that caused great concern for many parents and leaders, and its rising incidence was one of the reasons given for lowering the age limit for Pro-Rec members. Many prominent spokesmen stated that increasing recreation opportunities was one of the answers to the problem of juvenile delinquency, and Pro-Rec was the logical place to start these programmes quickly and inexpensively. In October, 1944, Vancouver City Council gave a \$1,000 grant to Pro-Rec for its junior programme, to help combat juvenile delinquency.⁵ British Columbia Premier John Hart, commenting after the 1944 Mass Display in Vancouver, said that,

¹Public Schools Report, 1943-44, p. 126.

²Ibid., p. 127.

³Ian Eisenhardt, "Canada's National Physical Fitness Act," *Journal of Health, Physical Education and Recreation*, XIV:4 (April, 1945), p. 187.

⁴Daily Province, October 13th, 1944, p. 6.

⁵Ibid.

in his opinion, Pro-Rec was the answer to juvenile delinquency,¹ and in the 1945 provincial legislature debate on the Pro-Rec budget, members from both sides of the Assembly requested larger grants for recreation programmes because of this social problem.²

LEADERSHIP

One of the most important single events in the history of Pro-Rec was the enlistment, in January, 1941, of Ian Eisenhardt, although it is probable that, at the time, no one realized the long-term effects that this would have.³ As was the case with many members of the armed services, Eisenhardt was simply granted leave, and a successor was not named for many years.⁴

As an interim measure, an Executive Board was appointed to administer the Pro-Rec programme. This Board consisted of: Jerry Mathisen, Provincial Chief Instructor; Hilda Keatley, Chief Instructress for Vancouver; and Paul King, Provincial Secretary.⁵ Eisenhardt had specifically recommended to Weir, Minister of Education, that Ernest Grant, former head of the Vancouver Park Board Recreation Department and Chief

¹*Public Schools Report*, 1944-45, p. 136.

²*Victoria Daily Times*, March 13th, 1945, p. 2.

³The full significance of this will be discussed in a later chapter.

⁴Eisenhardt was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the First Battalion, Irish Fusiliers, and applied for leave from his position as Pro-Rec Director on January 17th, 1941. Letter to G.M. Weir, Minister of Education, Victoria, from Ian Eisenhardt, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, January 17th, 1941 (Eisenhardt Collection).

⁵*Public Schools Report*, 1940-41, p. 97.

Instructor for Vancouver, be appointed Acting Director,¹ but this recommendation was not implemented. Mathisen served as chairman of the Executive Board.²

The Executive Board assumed its responsibilities in January, 1941,³ and these were carried out in addition to the regular duties of each individual. Because theirs were already full-time positions, the three Board members were not able to carry on with the kinds of activities that had occupied much of Eisenhardt's time.⁴ In 1942, Paul King left the Pro-Rec,⁵ and no Provincial Secretary was appointed to replace him.⁶ Nor was anyone else named to the Executive Board, and Mathisen and Keatley thus comprised the Board until June, 1944, when, following the formal resignation of Eisenhardt, Mathisen was appointed Director.⁷

After Eisenhardt enlisted in the Canadian Army, he was seconded to the National Selective Service, for the purpose of organizing sports and recreation for workers in war industries.⁸ In 1943, he was appointed Canadian Army Sports Officer and developed a sports programme for soldiers stationed in Canada.⁹ After the *National Physical Fitness Act* was passed

¹Letter to G.M. Weir, Minister of Education, Victoria, from Ian Eisenhardt, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, January 17th, 1941 (Eisenhardt Collection).

²Public Schools Report, 1944-45, p. 136.

³Public Schools Report, 1940-41, p. 97.

⁴Interview with R.J. Phillips, May 10th, 1977.

⁵Interview with Paul King, September 1st, 1976.

⁶Interview with R.J. Phillips, May 19th, 1977.

⁷Public Schools Report, 1944-45, p. 136.

⁸Sawula, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

⁹Doris Plewes, "Canadian News", *Journal of Health, Physical Education and Recreation*, XVII:9 (November, 1946), p. 547.

in 1943, and the National Council on Physical Fitness established, Eisenhardt became the first National Director of Physical Fitness.¹ With this appointment, Eisenhardt submitted his resignation from Pro-Rec, and Mathisen was then named Pro-Rec Director, retaining his responsibilities as Provincial Supervisor for Men.

The effect of three-and-one-half years of temporary management was far from satisfactory. Although Mathisen was chairman of the Executive Board, he did not have the authority that accompanied the position of Director.² More serious was the conflict between Mathisen as director of the men's programme and Keatley, director of the women. This conflict had developed over the years as the result of strong personalities clashing over matters pertaining to the entire programme, and was widely recognized as a feature of the administration of Pro-Rec from this time onward. Both individuals were very competent in their work, and both commanded the loyalty of the instructors and instructresses who worked for them; but they did not like one another, and without Eisenhardt there to keep the administration working smoothly, a permanent schism developed between the men's and women's programmes.³ This separation was evident in the annual reports presented by the Board. The 1940-41 report included, for the first time, a section on the men's programme, and one on the women's programme.⁴ The 1941-42 report indicated, again for the first

¹Sawula, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

²Interview with Edward Lipinski, former member of Pro-Rec office staff, Vancouver, B.C., May 19th, 1977.

³This schism has been reported to the writer by every person interviewed who was involved in or familiar with Pro-Rec from 1941 onwards.

⁴*Public Schools Report*, 1940-41, pp. 98-99.

PLATE IX



(a) Jerry Mathisen, Provincial
Supervisor for Men (Mass
Display Programme, 1948)



(b) Hilda Keatley, Chief Instruct-
ress for Women (Mass Display
Programme, 1948)

time, separate men's and women's centres for the winter programme.¹ This separation in the annual reports continued throughout the wartime period.

One other leadership change occurred when George Weir, the Minister of Education who had instituted the Pro-Rec programme, was defeated in the provincial election of 1941.² He was re-elected in 1945, and became Minister of Education once again, but for most of the War, Pro-Rec was without its strongest political supporter.

THE PRO-REC PROGRAMME

With the outbreak of war, the dominant Pro-Rec policy became one of providing a programme designed to meet some of the needs of wartime society, as opposed to a programme for a society affected by a severe economic depression. This new policy did not result in any actual change in the activities presented at Pro-Rec centres. Rather, its influence was seen in the addition of certain war work activities, and in the stress placed upon producing a citizenry fit to wage war, either in battle or on the home front.

Basic Winter Programme

Generally, the basic programme offered at centres differed little from that established during the previous period. Gymnastics, dancing, Keep Fit activities, and games comprised the typical women's session,³ while the men engaged in games, tumbling and apparatus work, conditioning

¹Public Schools Report, 1941-42, pp. 100-101.

²Ormsby, *British Columbia: A History*, op. cit., p. 473.

³"Instructors' Handbook - 1940-41", op. cit., p. 10.

exercises, combatives, and weightlifting.¹ There was a noticeable shift in emphasis towards conditioning and Keep Fit activities, to prepare members for military service or war-work. "Fitness for service" became the slogan for Pro-Rec and this was emphasized in registration publicity.² Eisenhardt, in a statement to instructors, said that "in war time, the Pro-Rec training has a special task ----- Fitness for service to the Empire."³

Instructors were encouraged to provide variety in their programmes to make them more interesting,⁴ and the recreational aspects of women's classes were given more emphasis.⁵ A publicity release stated that gymnastics would be stressed less,⁶ and mixed folk dancing was introduced.⁷ In the men's programme, special businessmen's classes were inaugurated, largely because of the drastic decrease in men's attendance. These classes were designed to interest middle-aged men, and, in a manner comparable to the Keep Fit classes for women, were less strenuous and less demanding than the regular men's classes. It was suggested that "such classes ought to be held in the early part of the evening and for not more than one hour's duration (including time for stripping, etc.)."⁸

¹Public Schools Report, 1940-41, p. 98.

²Vancouver Sun, October 1st, 1941, p. 5.

³British Columbia, Department of Education, Recreational and Physical Education Branch, 1940 Summer School of Recreational and Physical Education: Official Textbook (Vancouver, 1940), foreword, p. 1 (Keatley Collection).

⁴Public Schools Report, 1939-40, p. 89.

⁵"Instructors' Handbook - 1940-41", *op. cit.*, p. 10.

⁶Daily Province, October 14th, 1939, magazine section, p. 2.

⁷Daily Province, August 16th, 1940, p. 9.

⁸"Instructors' Handbook - 1940-41", *op. cit.*, p. 7.

The evening's session was to consist of "a good Exercise Table, followed by a few light, enjoyable games such as volley-ball, goodminton, etc."¹

An important wartime feature of the basic programme was the provision of activities and facilities for special groups, both civilian and military. These classes, in which physical fitness was emphasized, were started during the 1941-42 season, when the war effort was reaching its maximum commitment, and they continued until the end of the War. One of the first groups to benefit from these arrangements was the Boeing Athletic Club, consisting of workers at the Boeing aircraft plant near the Vancouver airport. The members held badminton, basketball, and rifle-shooting sessions at the Pro-Rec building. At the headquarters swimming pool, Canadian Naval Reserve recruits were accommodated for their swimming tests.² The 1941-42 season also saw the introduction of recreational and physical conditioning classes for members of Air Raid Protection (A.R.P.) units; because the participants were older than most Pro-Rec members, their activities were less strenuous than those in the regular programme.³ During the summer of 1942, a special course was presented for recreational leaders in A.R.P. The men selected by their divisional inspectors were chiefly World War I veterans, and therefore advanced in years; consequently their programme was a very modified one, consisting of mild exercises, light recreational games, and jiu-jitsu holds.⁴ By 1942-43, the list of special groups receiving Pro-Rec attention had grown to include: physical training classes for the Canadian Red Cross Corps

¹*Ibid.*

²*Public Schools Report, 1940-41, p. 99.*

³*Public Schools Report, 1940-41, p. 101.*

⁴*Public Schools Report, 1942-43, p. 109.*

in the Okanagan and the Fraser Valley; Reserve Army units in the Fraser Valley and the Kootenays; and Sea Cadets and Air Force Cadets in Vancouver.¹ Finally, in 1944, it was reported that Pro-Rec classes were held for the Western Air Command (Women's Division), Royal Canadian Air Force wives and female personnel, and Sea Island (Greater Vancouver) wartime housing residents.² Clearly, Pro-Rec was making its services available to special groups in a manner not witnessed prior to the War.

Summer Programme

General arrangements for the Pro-Rec summer programme did not change during the War, nor did registration decrease as much as that for the winter programme. Still, some activities were affected by wartime shortages; tennis and track and field classes were curtailed due to lack of instructors, and a few sports suffered from lack of equipment.³

The programme was expanded by the addition of new sports, so that by the end of the War, the schedule consisted of nine activities, compared to six in the summer of 1939: in 1940, a baseball school for boys was held in Victoria, and cycling trips were arranged in Vancouver;⁴ box lacrosse was also introduced, and a Pro-Rec team was entered in the Greater Vancouver intermediate league.⁵ In that same year, Pro-Rec softball in Vancouver was expanded to an eleven-team summer league.⁶

¹*Ibid.*, p. 111.

²*Daily Province*, October 13th, 1944, p. 6.

³*Public Schools Report*, 1943-44, p. 124.

⁴*Public Schools Report*, 1940-41, p. 97.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶*Ibid.*

Open-air centres, imitating the Vancouver model, were opened in the Fraser Valley, the Okanagan, and Victoria, during 1941.¹ Activities at these centres included; group relays, net games, track and field, horseshoe pitching, softball, hardball, and, in the Interior, football.²

An important innovation in the summer programme was also introduced in 1941. This was the Travelling Sports Coach, who visited towns in the Fraser Valley and the Okanagan during the period of May 26th to July 26th. Coaching was provided for tennis, swimming and diving, and life saving, in co-operation with local sports organizations.³

Other programme changes during the War years included the expansion of cricket, a perennial Pro-Rec summer activity, to twelve teams, including four for women.⁴ Softball teams also increased in numbers that year, and the British Columbia senior men's and senior women's titles were won by Pro-Rec teams.⁵ Another innovation, the result of wartime demands, was the institution of indoor physical fitness classes; started in 1942, these pre-military classes were held in Vancouver, Victoria, and New Westminster, during July and August in the early mornings.⁶ Horse-shoe pitching became a popular activity for senior members in Okanagan centres, with regular matches and play-offs scheduled throughout the province.⁷ Finally, in the summer of 1944, fastball was introduced and

¹Public Schools Report, 1941-42, p. 99.

²Public Schools Report, 1942-43, p. 108.

³Public Schools Report, 1941-42, p. 100.

⁴Public Schools Report, 1942-43, p. 108.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Daily Province, May 31st, 1940, p. 9; and June 28th, 1940, p. 11.

⁷Public Schools Report, 1943-44, p. 125.

quickly became the outstanding summer activity; leagues were conducted in many districts in the province.¹

Sports Programme

Expansion of the sports programme continued throughout the War, although shortages of personnel, facilities, and equipment affected this feature of Pro-Rec work. During the six-year War period, Pro-Rec headquarters was moved three times, and in each instance, the sports programme was modified. The 1941 move to the former Western Sports Centre provided an opportunity for the addition of badminton to the Pro-Rec calendar, in the main gymnasium of that facility.² In the middle of the 1942-43 season, Pro-Rec moved its headquarters to the Vancouver Athletic Club; because this facility did not have a swimming pool, the aquatics programme was conducted in city pools only.³ Finally, in late December, 1945, a fire destroyed the Vancouver Athletic Club and Pro-Rec was suddenly homeless.⁴ This incident affected sports such as basketball, which was regularly scheduled there, and for the remaining years of its existence, Pro-Rec headquarters were located in offices to which no athletic facilities were attached. Although the Vancouver sports programme was forced into non-Pro-Rec facilities, it was not curtailed to any significant degree; in 1944-45, basketball, badminton, floor hockey, box soccer, grass hockey, soccer, indoor swimming, and volleyball were still offered in organized competition.⁵

¹Public Schools Report, 1944-45, p. 137.

²Vancouver Sun, October 1st, 1941, p. 5.

³Public Schools Report, 1942-43, p. 110.

⁴News-Herald, March 1st, 1945, p. 1.

⁵Public Schools Report, 1944-45, pp. 139-140.

A number of new sports were introduced, in addition to badminton. Rugby was included in the 1939-40 programme,¹ the same year that women's basketball teams entered the Lower Mainland league.² Ice rink activities were featured in Nelson, where Pro-Rec instructors worked in close co-operation with the new community centre there.³ The first free "dry-ski" classes offered to the public in Vancouver were presented by Pro-Rec in November, 1940, in the headquarters gymnasium; these classes consisted of conditioning exercises particularly suited to skiing.⁴

Sports coaching courses also received emphasis at this time. A soccer school was instituted during the summer of 1944, and proved very successful, with approximately seven hundred boys enrolled for the course; this was presented in conjunction with the B.C. Junior Juvenile Soccer Commission.⁵ Also, in co-operation with the Western Canadian Ski Association, a course for ski instructors was conducted at Revelstoke, in the Kootenays; presented during February, 1945, this course was attended by students from all parts of the province.⁶

As the War period drew to a close, the growth of the sports programme was reflected in the appointment, in the summer of 1945, of Robert Quinn as Sports Officer, who organized fastball, lacrosse, and cricket

¹Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Pro-Rec Bulletin" (mimeographed), March 3rd, 1940, p. 4.

²Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Pro-Rec Bulletin" (mimeographed), March 17th, 1940, p. 2.

³*Public Schools Report*, 1943-44, p. 128.

⁴Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Pro-Rec Bulletin" (mimeographed), November 24th, 1940, p. 2.

⁵*Public Schools Report*, 1944-45, p. 138.

⁶*Ibid.*

teams for Pro-Rec members.¹

The records for Pro-Rec activities are far from complete, particularly for the War period. The extent to which inter-centre competitions were conducted during this time is not known, but it can be assumed that shortages and restrictions reduced this aspect of the programme. The only event regularly reported was the men's gymnastics competitions. The 1940 gymnastics championships included both men and women,² but from 1941 onwards, the annual reports for the Recreational and Physical Education Branch made reference only to gymnastics competitions for men.³ This was also the period of the greatest division between the men's and women's programmes, and it is quite possible that women's gymnastics competition ceased after 1940.

According to reports by Mathisen, inter-centre competition of a new form was introduced during this period, although the activities themselves were not new. This event, the Tabloid Sports Meet, consisted of a number of indoor contests and races, for which each men's centre could enter a team. Events in the one-evening programme included: standing broad jump, basketball throw, medicine ball throw, potato race, standing hop-step-and-jump, modified hurdle race, obstacle race, and standing high jump. Teams competed against a standard, accumulating points for each event.⁴

¹Public Schools Report, 1945-46, p. 137.

²Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Fifth Annual Pro-Rec Gymnastics Competition" (mimeographed) [PABC: 8.8.5c, No. 28].

³Public Schools Reports, 1940-41 to 1944-45. Nurmberg states that the Pro-Rec championships were the only regular gymnastics competitions to be held in Canada from 1940 to 1945; Nurmberg, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

⁴Information to Pro-Rec instructors from R.J. Phillips and A. Batchelor, Pro-Rec Administrative Staff (mimeographed), Vancouver, March 6th, 1948 [PABC: 8.8.5 e].

Social Activities

As with many features of social life at this time, Pro-Rec activities were expanded to include socials and dances presented to raise money or goods for war charities.¹ Displays were also held in association with Victory Loan and War Bond campaigns, and for the benefit of armed forces groups.² The most important new social event was instituted in the summer of 1945, and was to become a popular annual occurrence. This was the Pro-Rec Picnic, held at Bowen Island near Vancouver, a favourite location for picnics sponsored by organizations and business firms.³

Special Programmes

Of the special programmes offered at this time, the most important were, quite naturally, directly related to the War itself. In November, 1939, the Pro-Rec administration announced a special programme for those wanting to develop their physical fitness to a level suited to wartime preparedness. This programme was widely publicized, and Eisenhardt stressed that Pro-Rec was meeting the needs of a wartime society with its free programme.⁴ The special programme was designed to serve four categories of non-fit individuals:

- (1) Men living in localities which are not yet supplied with a Non-permanent Militia Unit, and who are anxious to make themselves more ready to serve their country.
- (2) Boys not in attendance at school who are too young to join the Canadian Active Service Forces or the Non-permanent Active Militia.

¹Public Schools Report, 1941-42, p. 99.

²Ibid., p. 102.

³Interview with Hilda Keatley, May 27th, 1977.

⁴Canadian Association of Physical Education, *Bulletin*, VIII:2 (December, 1940), p. 5.

- (3) Men who — for reasons of health or age — are not in a position to enlist in a military unit, and who would welcome the opportunity to enroll for the Pro-Rec conditioning classes.
- (4) Women of all ages who would benefit through a systematic series of recreative and "keep fit" activities.¹

The emphasis on pre-military physical training was reflected in the list of activities offered for men; this included military physical training tables, squad drill, and trench-combat exercises.² This programme was given the name of the "broomstick squad", because, in the military drills, broomsticks were used as dummy guns.³ Women's classes included a new activity, industrial weightlifting, an idea taken from the British Minister of Labour, who suggested this activity so that women engaged in war industries would learn the correct way to lift unusually heavy weights.⁴

In addition to physical recreation and social programmes, Pro-Rec organized a number of war work activities, and every woman member of Pro-rec was encouraged to participate in at least one of these activities.⁵ In 1941, with better facilities available at the new headquarters, the Pro-Rec Red Cross unit was established; classes were held twice weekly, for which the Vancouver General Hospital supplied the necessary equipment.⁶ Early in the War, Pro-Rec women participated in a large-scale knitting

¹Public Schools Report, 1939-40, p. 90.

²"Mass Display Programme", 1943, p. 4 (Keatley Collection).

³New World, I:8 (October, 1940), p. 8; see also Daily Province August 16th, 1940, p. 9.

⁴Public Schools Report, 1941-42, p. 102.

⁵Daily Colonist, March 28th, 1942, p. 3.

⁶Daily Province, June 14th, 1941, p. 24; see also Public Schools Report, 1941-42, p. 101.

PLATE X



Men's Pre-Military Exercise Programme - "Broomstick Squad"
(*New World*, October, 1940)

project, in which more than one thousand woollen squares were sewn into bedcovers and then sent to air-raid victims in England.¹ Home Nursing courses were also conducted at Pro-Rec headquarters, under the auspices of the Canadian Red Cross,² and lectures on wartime nutrition were presented by the Greater Vancouver Health League.³ The St. John Ambulance Association gave First Aid courses for men and women members of Pro-Rec,⁴ and the headquarters became an official A.R.P. district post and First Aid station.⁵ Red Cross and Home Nursing programmes continued until the end of the War,⁶ but by 1944-45, the emphasis on war work had diminished, and Pro-Rec was starting to plan for peacetime.⁷

One special programme associated with Pro-Rec during the 1930's discontinued its affiliation early in the War. This was the Self-Help Drama Organization which became the responsibility of the Community Drama Branch of the Department of Education, during the 1939-40 season.⁸

The youth hostelling programme which Pro-Rec had inaugurated in 1937 continued to operate throughout the War. The advent of gasoline rationing made this form of holidaying especially attractive,⁹ and more facilities were opened during this period. In the summer of 1940, fifteen

¹*Daily Province*, February 13th, 1941, p. 12.

²*Public Schools Report*, 1941-42, p. 99.

³*Ibid.*

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶*Public Schools Report*, 1944-45, p. 140.

⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 136-140.

⁸*Public Schools Report*, 1939-40, p. 90.

⁹"Mass Display Programme", 1942, p. 12.

hostels operated throughout the Fraser Valley and Vancouver Island,¹ and in 1941, a loop was opened in the Okanagan.² In 1942, the Executive of the B.C. Branch of the Canadian Youth Hostel Association assumed full control of this Branch,³ although Pro-Rec still provided a direct subsidy.⁴ Pro-Rec headquarters continued as the Youth Hostel Association office, and the B.C. field worker for youth hostels was a Pro-Rec instructor who received one-half of her salary from the Youth Hostel Association.⁵

The extensive programme offered by Pro-Rec during the War catered to a much wider segment of the population than that served during the 1930's. The addition of activities further expanded Pro-Rec operations, and these two factors brought forth criticisms from institutions and clubs that Pro-Rec was functioning in opposition to these groups.⁶ In response to such criticisms, a policy statement was released which stated that Pro-Rec was not a closed club operating in opposition to other agencies, and that it offered the following services:

- (1) The establishing of recreation centres in districts where no group or club is operating; this implies complete organization — halls, publicity, leaders, equipment, time-tables, and activity programmes.
- (2) Supplying and sponsoring leaders for an already organized group.

¹British Columbia, Department of Education, *Summer School News*, III:4 (July 22-27, 1940), p. 1.

²Penticton *Herald*, February 27th, 1941.

³Canadian Youth Hostelling Association, "Come Hostelling", printed flyer, n.d. (Keatley Collection).

⁴*Public Schools Report*, 1943-44, p. 128.

⁵Canada, Department of National Health and Welfare, National Council on Physical Fitness, *Bulletin No. 3*, (Ottawa: The King's Printer, 1945), p. 50.

⁶*Public Schools Report*, 1943-44, p. 124.

- (3) Providing facilities for organized groups where feasible.
- (4) Direct subsidizing of established organizations.
- (5) Training leaders for clubs.
- (6) Providing equipment for groups having their own leaders, facilities, and organization.¹

In addition, Pro-Rec provided services of an organizational kind for outside groups, assisted in the formation of new groups, and strengthened already-existing groups.²

By 1944, Pro-Rec was becoming more involved with community recreation councils throughout the province, and this became an important feature of the total programme. The establishment of these councils and of new community centres will be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

General Administration

During the War, the general structure of administration for Pro-Rec continued as it had been during the Depression period, with the notable exception of Eisenhardt's absence, as detailed above in the section on Leadership. Eligibility rules were unchanged, and, for the first two years of the War, no fees were charged.³

Vancouver continued to be the site of the Pro-Rec head office, but its location was changed three times during the War. The first move came in 1941, when the former Western Sports Centre on Dunsmuir Street

¹*Ibid.*

²*Ibid.*

³Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Pro-Rec Bulletin" (mimeographed), April 14th, 1940, p. 3.

was leased as an economy measure¹ and as a means of consolidating many of the wartime activities that were scattered throughout the city.² The building contained a gymnasium and swimming pool, and summer courses for instructors were held there during 1941 and 1942.³ In 1942, the ownership of that head office building changed, and the Pro-Rec administration then moved to the Vancouver Athletic Club at Athletic Park, a popular baseball park at the south end of Granville Street Bridge. While this location provided a larger gymnasium, it did not have the advantages of a swimming pool and meeting rooms that had been provided at the previous headquarters.⁴ It was possible, however, to expand some of the major sports in the new centre, and the annual mass displays were held there in both 1942⁵ and 1943.⁶

On the night of February 28th, 1945, fire broke out at Athletic Park, and the Pro-Rec headquarters was destroyed in the blaze that razed the buildings. Mathisen's wire to Eisenhardt described the situation in the terse language of telegraphy:

FIRE COMPLETELY DESTROYED OFFICE ALL RECORDS FILMS PICTURES
CUTS BOOKS ETC STOP GYMNASIUM DAMAGED BEYOND REPAIR FOR
MONTHS TO COME STOP MASS DISPLAY DUBIOUS NO PLACE FOR
REHEARSALS⁷

¹*Victoria Daily Times*, May 26th, 1941, p. 13.

²*Daily Province*, June 14th, 1941, p. 24.

³*Daily Province*, June 28th, 1941, p. 17; see also *Public Schools Report*, 1942-43, p. 109.

⁴*Public Schools Report*, 1942-43, p. 108.

⁵"Mass Display Programme", April, 1942.

⁶*Daily Province*, April 21st, 1943, p. 5.

⁷Telegram to Ian Eisenhardt, National Director of Physical Fitness, Ottawa, from Jerry Mathisen, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, March 1st, 1945 [PAC: RG 29/826/214-1-9, Pt. 1].

Little was saved from the fire. A few pieces of equipment, such as gymnasium mats, escaped the blaze, and the office safe was intact, but *all Pro-Rec records were lost*, along with \$2,000 worth of display costumes made and paid for by Pro-Rec members.¹ The cause of the fire was never determined, but the wooden buildings burned quickly and were completely gutted. Five young boys had been working out in the gymnasium, and narrowly escaped injury; if the fire had started ninety minutes later, it would have caught hundred of spectators watching a Pro-Rec women's basketball game. The Mass Display was presented that year as planned, after women members made another complete set of costumes.² Although new office quarters were soon obtained, at 445 Richards Street,³ the loss of permanent headquarters with suitable facilities for Pro-Rec activities was a great handicap.⁴

Reports and Records

Membership reports changed very little during the War. The separation of the membership into employed and unemployed categories remained a requirement until the National Physical Fitness programme was inaugurated. This new programme, which came into effect in British Columbia on April 1st, 1944,⁵ also removed the previous restriction against the registration of juniors. Prior to that, junior classes were reported, but

¹*Vancouver Sun*, March 1st, 1945, p. 8; see also *News-Herald*, March 1st, 1945, p. 1.

²*News-Herald*, May 5th, 1945, p. 2.

³*Vancouver Sun*, April 28th, 1945, magazine section, p. 6.

⁴*Public Schools Report*, 1944-45, p. 136.

⁵*Ibid.*

junior members were not registered; with the new scheme, it became necessary to record members as either "Fifteen and over" or "Fourteen and under".¹

Staff and Instructors

The general manpower shortage was the principal cause of major changes in staff and instructors. When Eisenhardt left, he was considered to be on leave only, and no addition was made to the staff. Then, when Paul King left, his work as publicity officer was simply absorbed by other office workers; later, when Eric Martin, Registrar, resigned, his duties were assigned to R.J. Phillips, accountant.² As stated earlier, many instructors enlisted in the armed services, and new appointments were curtailed, especially during the early years of the War.³ By the end of the War, staff numbers had regained the level of 1939-40, with approximately one hundred paid employees, and hundreds of volunteers,⁴ but this was still well below the pre-war high of one hundred and nineteen paid staff.⁵

Training of Instructors

The Pro-Rec Summer School of Recreational and Physical Education Education still operated each year, but a number of changes were made

¹Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Pro-Rec Senior Registration", and "Pro-Rec Junior Registration", printed cards, Vancouver (Keatley Collection).

²British Columbia, Legislative Assembly, *Sessional Papers, Public Accounts - 1941-42*, (Victoria: The King's Printer, 1943), p. EE 86.

³*Daily Province*, June 28th, 1941, p. 17.

⁴Canadian Youth Commission, *Youth and Recreation*, op. cit., p. 79.

⁵Comprehensive Report, 1938-39, pp. 169-171.

because of the special conditions caused by the War. In 1941, the school was reduced from the usual six weeks to a three-week refresher course,¹ chiefly because few new appointments were being made to the instructional staff.²

In the summer of 1942, an important change was effected. With transportation and accommodation arrangements for out-of-town students made more difficult by wartime restrictions, Pro-Rec began a policy of decentralization of the Summer School. A branch for men was established at Kelowna in the Okanagan Valley, in addition to the regular course in Vancouver.³ The following year, further decentralization was seen, with courses conducted at Nelson in the Kootenays, and in the Similkameen district.⁴ In 1944, decentralization was still a necessity, with classes held in Nelson and Kamloops;⁵ the Kamloops course concentrated on junior gymnastics because the Kamloops Athletic Association owned, and made available to Pro-Rec, the best junior-sized equipment in the province.⁶ By 1945, with the European War over and the Pacific War coming to an end, it was possible to resume the full-length course, and require the instructors to attend the Vancouver Summer School.⁷ Special attention was given to servicemen and women returning from the armed forces, and

¹Public Schools Report, 1941-42, p. 100.

²Daily Province, June 28th, 1941, p. 17.

³Public Schools Report, 1942-43, p. 109.

⁴Public Schools Report, 1943-44, p. 125.

⁵Public Schools Report, 1944-45, p. 137.

⁶Canada, Department of National Health and Welfare, National Council of Physical Fitness, *Bulletin 3*, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

⁷Public Schools Report, 1945-46, p. 140.

the Pro-Rec course was included in the vocational training scheme for veterans.¹

An important new feature of the Pro-Rec Summer School was the credit given to school teachers by the Department of Education for passing grades in courses which were of the same content as those given at the annual Summer School of Education in Victoria.² Conversely, courses offered by the Department of Education could be applied toward the Pro-Rec instructor's certificate.³ The Department of Education summer courses for physical education teachers were first offered in 1939.⁴

By the end of the wartime period, seven hundred student-hours were required for a Pro-Rec certificate,⁵ and students normally spent four or five years as leaders before qualifying as instructors or assistant instructors.⁶ This was a significant increase over the three to four years required in 1939-40.⁷

Pro-Rec Summer School curricula reflected the special wartime programmes presented at centres during this period. Instructors took courses in Air Raid Protection, hand-grenade throwing, rifle-shooting, military

¹Letter to Ian Eisenhardt, National Director of Physical Fitness, Ottawa, from Jerry Mathisen, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, May 14th, 1945 [PAC: RG 29/826/214-1-9/Pt.1].

²"Mass Display Programme", 1940 (Keatley Collection).

³Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Short Report on the B.C. Physical Fitness Plan (Known as 'Pro-Rec')" (mimeographed), Vancouver, 1943 [PAC: RG/829/214-1-9].

⁴*Gymnast*, V:2 (February-March, 1939), p. 21.

⁵Canadian Youth Commission, *Youth and Recreation*, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

⁶Canada, Department of National Health and Welfare, National Council on Physical Fitness, *Bulletin No. 2*, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁷*Supra*, p. 142.

marching, and industrial lifting, in addition to the regular complement of courses established during the 1930's.¹ Further special courses, given at times and places other than the regular summer course, included a ski instructors' school at Hollyburn Mountain, North Vancouver, and courses given in connection with the annual Rural Leadership School presented by the University of British Columbia Extension Department.² In these ways, Pro-Rec expanded and modified its programme of instructors' training to meet new demands and challenges.

Facilities and Equipment

As would be expected, the effects of the War on facilities and equipment were chiefly negative, because of shortages and military priorities. The problem of obtaining school gymnasias rent-free was a persistent one, and facilities were generally poor. The only exceptions were in Nelson and Trail, in the Kootenays, where community centres provided adequate gymnasias, pools, skating rinks, bowling alleys, and curling rinks;³ Pro-Rec classes were conducted in these centres.

Military needs took priority in space, manpower, and supplies, and this affected all recreational activities in Canadian society. In particular, Pro-Rec lost the use of military facilities such as the Drill Hall in North Vancouver and the Armory in Vancouver.⁴ The excellent head

¹Public Schools Reports, 1940-41, p. 97 and 1941-42, p. 100.

²Public Schools Report, 1940-41, p. 98.

³Canada, Department of National Health and Welfare, National Council on Physical Fitness, *Bulletin No. 2*, op. cit., p. 32.

⁴Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "1939-40 Season Centres' Schedule: Greater Vancouver" (mimeographed), Vancouver [PABC: 8.8.5 c].

office arrangements at the Western Sports Centre helped to overcome this loss during 1941 and 1942, but on the whole, Pro-Rec lost ground in its battle for better facilities.

Although no direct evidence has been found, it may be assumed that equipment purchases and repairs were minimal or even non-existent, because of wartime priorities. A comparison of expenditures for 1938-39 and 1942-43 supports this assumption. In 1938-39, equipment expenditures totalled \$6,642.08, for 8.8 per cent of the budget.¹ In 1942-43, the portion of incidental expenses which could conceivably be equipment costs did not exceed \$1,800, or 4.5 per cent of the total budget.²

In 1945, when it became apparent that the War would soon end, Mathisen and Eisenhardt tried to obtain gymnastics equipment, such as tumbling mats, from the armed services through the War Assets Corporation. Although pressure was applied at all possible levels, Pro-Rec was unable to acquire any surplus items.³

Finances

The six war years witnessed extreme changes in Pro-Rec's financial arrangements, with wide fluctuations in the total grants awarded and three different federal funding authorities for recreation programmes. Table 14 illustrates the amounts granted to Pro-Rec each year, from both federal and provincial sources.

¹*Supra*, p. 151.

²British Columbia, Legislative Assembly, *Sessional Papers, Public Accounts - 1942-43*, Victoria: The King's Printer, 1944), pp. EE 83-84.

³Correspondence between Ian Eisenhardt, National Director of Physical Fitness, Ottawa, and Jerry Mathisen, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, March to October, 1945 [PAC: RG 29/826/214-1-9/Pt.1].

TABLE 14
GOVERNMENT GRANTS TO PRO-REC: 1939 TO 1945¹

Year	Provincial	Federal (% of total)	Total
1939-40	\$60,319.35	\$19,000.00 (23.95)	\$79,319.35
1940-41	58,691.66	14,249.71 (19.54)	72,941.37
1941-42	39,986.61	10,000.00 (20.01)	49,986.61
1942-43	29,722.40	9,986.75 (25.15)	39,709.16
1943-44	30,695.70	10,000.00 (24.57)	40,695.70
1944-45	28,402.74	16,015.75 (36.06)	44,418.49

During the Depression, the federal authority for financial support of Pro-Rec was the *Unemployment and Agricultural Assistance Act*, but in May, 1939, the *Youth Training Act* was passed, and controlled the 1939-40 federal grant. This act was intended to operate for three years only, and it provided assistance for Pro-Rec during 1940-41 and 1941-42. When that Act expired, reduced grants were made under the authority of the *Vocational Training Co-ordination Act*, for the years 1942-43 and 1943-44. Then, in 1943, the *National Physical Fitness Act* was passed, and governed federal grants to Pro-Rec from 1944-45 until the British Columbia programme was disbanded.

As shown in Table 14, allocations from federal sources fluctuated widely during the War, from a high of \$19,000 in 1939-40 to a low of \$9,986.75 in 1942-43. This was due primarily to the rise in employment caused by an expanding wartime economy. The *Vocational Training*

¹See Appendix E.

Co-ordination Act of 1942 was designed, in part, to provide training for the unemployed, but because the numbers of unemployed were less than in previous years, the grants to provinces were reduced.¹ The marked increase to \$16,015.75 for 1944-45 was the result of an entirely different kind of federal funding authority, the *National Physical Fitness Act*, based upon development of fitness rather than aid for the unemployed.

Grants from the Provincial government also varied in this period, decreasing from approximately \$60,000 in 1939-40 to less than \$30,000 by 1944-45. This can be attributed to a number of causes, the first of which was a general call for austerity brought about by the financial demands of the War. Eisenhardt recommended that the Pro-Rec budget be reduced by one-third, in view of the likely decrease in staff and in the number of centres.² In 1942, further reductions in the Pro-Rec grant provoked criticism from the opposition in the provincial legislature. In 1941, G.H. Perry had succeeded George Weir as Minister of Education, after Weir had been defeated in the provincial elections. Perry's 1942 education budget showed a thirty-three per cent reduction in the Pro-Rec grant, and in response to questions about this, Perry stated that:

In view of the number of men who have enlisted, and the fact that this was designed as an outlet for idle persons, I felt that this was the only place where I could justify the reductions.³

¹*Public Schools Report*, 1940-41, p. 89.

²Letter to G.M. Weir, Minister of Education, Victoria, B.C., from Ian Eisenhardt, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, July 25th, 1940 (Eisenhardt Collection).

³*News-Herald*, February 4th, 1942, p. 20.

A further comment by Perry, that "many persons had written and called urging him to cut out the whole vote"¹ for Pro-Rec, indicated that his attitude toward the programme was less sympathetic than Weir's.²

A new source of funds for Pro-Rec was the membership fee of fifty cents instituted at the beginning of the 1941-42 season. This represented a radical change in Pro-Rec policy, and although care was taken to ensure that no one was barred because of inability to pay, the new policy was indicative of a general improvement in the economic and employment status of British Columbians. The proceeds from this fee assessment were applied towards the rental cost of centres that would otherwise have closed.³ The receipt for the fee was a special Pro-Rec membership pin, the design of which became widely used in publicity projects.

An analysis of expenditures for various categories of costs during the War (Table 15) shows interesting trends, and demonstrates the relationship of major expenditures to the total costs of the programme. It can be seen that salaries decreased absolutely, as the number of instructors was reduced. It is likely that, as instructors left Pro-Rec for duty with the armed services, they were not replaced, either because trained personnel were not available or because the budget did not allow for replacements — and possibly for both reasons. The allocation of the total grant for salaries increased relatively, however, as the War continued. In 1942-43, the year in which Pro-Rec received its smallest

¹*Ibid.*

²Perry remained as Minister of Education until 1945, when he was succeeded by a re-elected Weir.

³*Public Schools Report, 1941-42, p. 99.*

TABLE 15
PARTIAL ANALYSIS OF EXPENDITURES: 1938 TO 1945¹

Year	Salaries	Rental ²	Other	Total
1938-39	\$48,692.50 (64.4)	\$5,686.19 (7.5)	\$21,266.86 (28.1)	\$75,645.55
1939-40	55,009.93 (69.4)	---	24,309.42 (30.6)	79,319.35
1940-41	49,513.87 (67.9)	---	23,427.50 (32.1)	72,941.37
1941-42	35,091.87 (70.2)	---	14,894.74 (29.8)	49,986.61
1942-43	29,216.68 (73.6)	7,933.50 (20.0)	2,558.98 (6.4)	39,709.16
1943-44	29,848.65 (73.3)	7,027.19 (17.3)	3,819.86 (9.4)	40,695.70

grant, the percentage allocated for salaries (73.6%) was the highest at any time in the history of the programme. Therefore, the decrease in salaries was not proportional to the decrease in total grants. Nor were rentals decreased proportionately during this time; in fact, this expenditure increased both absolutely and relatively, as shown in Table 15. The one area in which Pro-Rec did effect significant savings was in that category labelled "Other". This included: office supplies, travelling expenses, utilities, publicity, displays, equipment, and incidentals; it can be assumed that expenditures for equipment and travelling were drastically reduced during the War.

¹*Public Schools Reports*, 1939-40 to 1943-44; see also Comprehensive Report, 1938-39. (Figures in brackets represent percentages of the totals.)

²The Public Accounts for 1939-40, 1940-41, and 1941-42 do not list rental costs separately.

PROMOTION AND PUBLICITY

During the first two years of the War, publicity for Pro-Rec activities continued at its pre-war level, but when Paul King left the Branch in 1942, no one was appointed to assume his duties and responsibilities. As a result, the quality and quantity of public relations work diminished as the War progressed.¹

Publications

With the outbreak of War, the magazine, *The Gymnast*, was discontinued. For a short time, a small newspaper, *Pro-Rec*, was published,² but this did not have the status or circulation that had been attained by *The Gymnast*. For the benefit of instructors, the mimeographed weekly "Pro-Rec Bulletin" continued to be produced, with information on special events and competitions. Newspaper coverage, so outstanding during the first period, declined significantly after early 1941 when Eisenhardt left for the Army, although articles in magazine supplements still appeared two or three times each year.

In October 1940, a photographic essay on Pro-Rec appeared in *New World*, a national magazine.³ This five-page article contained fifteen photographs depicting various Pro-Rec activities, and a sixteenth photograph was featured on the magazine cover.

Radio

Regular Pro-Rec radio broadcasts in Vancouver had last been

¹Interview with R.J. Phillips, June 21st, 1978.

²*Pro-Rec*, I:4 (April 18th, 1941).

³*New World*, I:8 (October, 1940), pp. 4-8.

presented in 1937-38, and were discontinued for administrative reasons. By November, 1940, a programme was again being aired, on radio station CJOR. Called "Pro-Rec's on Parade",¹ it was heard each Saturday at 11:00 a.m.,² and consisted of announcements about Pro-Rec activities and talks on subjects related to health and physical fitness. These broadcasts continued throughout the War period.³

Motion Pictures

During the early 1940's, Pro-Rec was very active in the production of motion pictures. In June, 1940, the programme was the subject of an eleven-minute colour travelogue, to be shown in commercial motion picture theatres throughout North America.⁴ The 1942 Mass Display was also the subject of a newsreel film, for use in motion picture theatres across Canada.⁵

Following the formation of the National Council on Physical Fitness in 1944, a film entitled "Pro-Rec in British Columbia" was produced by the Department of National Health and Welfare, which made use of Pro-Rec footage from the 1930's, and from the annual Mass Display of 1940. This nineteen-minute film opened with an introduction by Eisenhardt, and included scenes of the display troupe which toured B.C.

¹Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Pro-Rec Bulletin", November 24th, 1940, p. 1 (Keatley Collection).

²"Mass Display Programme", April, 1942 (Keatley Collection).

³Public Schools Report, 1944-45, p. 60.

⁴Daily Province, June 6th, 1940, p. 26; see also News-Herald, June 10th, 1940, p. 11.

⁵Public Schools Report, 1942-43, p. 110.

in 1936, as well as activities at the Stanley Park Open-Air Centre. The 1939 Summer School classes were included, showing groups working in gymnastics, games, rhythmic, and weightlifting. Scenes from the 1940 Display showed the massed formations and synchronized movements which made this annual event so outstanding.¹

By 1940, a number of silent 16 mm films were provided for the use of Pro-Rec instructors. Subjects included: gymnastics and dancing displays, Dominion Gymnastics Championships, youth hostelling, Pro-Rec Summer School, touring gymnastics groups, outdoor Pro-Rec activities, mountain hikes, and Mass Displays.²

Displays

Pro-Rec continued its practice of presenting displays for the public, as annual events at each centre and in the form of Mass Displays in Vancouver and Victoria. The format of the Vancouver Display was generally similar to that seen in the 1930's, but the War produced a number of significant changes. The activities presented in these displays were altered to reflect both the changes in programme and the lowered enrollment of men at Pro-Rec centres. A comparison of the programmes for 1940, 1942 and 1945 illustrates these changes, and reflects some of the underlying influences of the War on Pro-Rec.

¹Canada, Department of National Health and Welfare, "Pro-Rec in British Columbia", 16mm film (National Film Board of Canada Film Library No. P.1194). This film is an excellent source of information about many Pro-Rec activities and provides a vivid depiction of the pageantry of the annual Mass Display.

²"Instructor's Handbook - 1940-41", *op. cit.*, p. 17.

- 1940 Keep Fit - women
- Fundamental Gymnastics - men
- Rhythmic Exercises - women
- Group Mat Tumbling - men
- Fundamental Gymnastics - women
- Apparatus Gymnastics and Games - men
- Corrective Exercises - women
- Tumbling, etc. - men
- Dance Routines (folk, tap, ball rhythm, ballet, ballroom) - women¹
- 1942 Military "P.T." - men
- Folk Dancing - women
- Cadet Drill, A.R.P., Commando-Style Vaulting - men
- Demonstrations by Members of Pro-Rec Blind Institute Class
- Fundamental Gymnastics - women
- Apparatus and Games - men
- Team Games - men
- Tumbling - men
- Dance Routines - women²
- 1945 Basic Gymnastics - boys
- Square Dancing
- Recreational Games - boys and men
- Gymnastics and Games - girls and women
- Physical Rehabilitation Exercises
- Cycling Demonstration - Youth Hostelling Association

¹"Mass Display Programme", 1940, *op. cit.*

²"Mass Display Programme", 1942, *op. cit.*

Fundamental Gymnastics - women

Tumbling and Apparatus - boys and men

Folk Dancing - women¹

From these summaries, it can be seen that many activities, such as fundamental gymnastics, were presented every year, while others were seen only once or twice. It is interesting to note the inclusion of A.R.P. activities in 1942, when invasion fears were high; also, the physical rehabilitation emphasis appeared in 1945, when this aspect of war recovery was becoming more important.

After 1940, the number of men appearing in the Mass Displays declined significantly.² Although many hundreds of women continued to participate, the total numbers did decline. Over twenty-two hundred men and women were seen in 1940, but only fifteen hundred in 1941. There was a further decrease the following year, when only six hundred participants performed; this was largely the result of a change in venue, from the large Forum to the cramped quarters of the Vancouver Athletic Club.

The number of nights on which the Mass Display was staged also varied during the War. Held only one night each year during the Depression, the 1940 Display was scheduled for two nights. At the last minute, a third night's performance was staged, because of a complete sell-out of tickets.³ The total number of spectators to see this

¹"Mass Display Programme", May 1945 (Keatley Collection).

²*News-Herald*, April 19th, 1941, p. 2.

³*Vancouver Sun*, April 24th, 1940, p. 6.

Display was estimated at twelve thousand.¹ Together with the twenty-two hundred participants, this made the 1940 Display the most successful in Pro-Rec history.

The 1942 Display was held for one night only,² but in 1943, three nights were again scheduled, because of the small seating capacity of the Vancouver Athletic Club.³ Not until 1944, when the Display could again return to the Forum,⁴ did the number of participants and spectators begin to approach pre-War levels.⁵

As in all other aspects of the Pro-Rec programme, the War profoundly affected the Mass Displays. The tone of the Displays, always somewhat militaristic, became noticeably patriotic, and many references were made to wartime activities and to individuals affected by the War. The Display programmes summarized above presented some examples of this. Others included:

- the donation of proceeds to organizations such as the Vancouver A.R.P. Drive, the Milk for Britain Fund, and the Queen's Canadian Fund for Air Raid Victims.⁶

¹*News-Herald*, April 29th, 1940, p. 5.

²"Mass Display Programme", 1942, *op. cit.*; see Appendix J.

³*Vancouver Sun*, April 21st, 1943, p. 17.

⁴During the mid-period of the War, the Vancouver Forum was used as a military equipment storage centre, and organizations sponsoring exhibitions and athletic events were forced to find other facilities. Arnold, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

⁵*Public Schools Report*, 1943-44, p. 127.

⁶Recreational and Physical Education Branch, *Pro-Rec*, *op. cit.*; see also "Mass Display Programme", 1942, *op. cit.*

PLATE XI



Mass Display, Vancouver Forum, 1940
(Keatley Collection)

- the listing, in Display programmes, of Pro-Rec personnel on active service.¹
- the performance of physical fitness routines by squads of R.C.A.F. Air Crew trainees.²
- the exhibition, inside the railing at the Forum, of thousands of articles contributed by participants to the Pro-Rec Red Cross units.³
- the singing of a special Pro-Rec marching song, to the tune of "Anchors Aweigh".⁴

Another important change in the general programme that was reflected in the annual Display was the inclusion, in 1945, of junior participants. One of the numbers involved "tiny tots", that is, two-year olds who performed with their mothers in tumbling routines.⁵ This display was also noted for the particular triumph of the two thousand women participants, whose costumes had been destroyed a few weeks earlier in the head office fire, and who were forced to make replacement costumes from materials such as curtains and tablecloths.⁶

Other Forms of Publicity

When a Pro-Rec pin was designed in 1941 as the receipt for payment of membership fees, it became a widely-used emblem for Pro-Rec.

¹"Mass Display Programme", 1943.

²*Ibid.*

³"Mass Display Programme", 1944.

⁴"Mass Display Programme", 1942. It is unfortunate that many Canadians, during the War, were more familiar with American patriotic tunes than they were with Canadian ones. But Canadians seem not to have produced many such tunes, apart from "O Canada" and "The Maple Leaf Forever".

⁵*News-Herald*, May 5th, 1945, p. 2.

⁶*Ibid.*

The design was a reduced photograph of two Pro-Rec instructors, one woman and one man, who formed a "V", for "Victory", by joining hands and leaning backward with toes touching. The words "Pro-Rec" were printed in the space between the two instructors. During the War, this emblem was used on the cover of Mass Display programmes and was enclosed within the phrase "Pulling Together for Victory".¹ By 1945, the phrase was "Building for Peace".² After the War, it was to be seen on flyers advertising Pro-Rec centres,³ and tickets for the annual Pro-Rec picnic.⁴

A unique form of publicity, a cross-Canada tour of a Pro-Rec troupe, was first proposed by Eisenhardt in 1936, but did not materialize because of lack of funds.⁵ Then, in 1939, the idea was again presented by Eisenhardt, as a promotion scheme for Pro-Rec and as a means of encouraging similar fitness schemes in other provinces. Federal officials were petitioned for free use of the old "colonist" cars of the Canadian National Railways as transportation for the Pro-Rec demonstrators,⁶ but the request was refused because the Railway Act did not permit such use, and because all cars were being commandeered by the

¹"Mass Display Programmes", 1942, 1943, 1944.

²"Mass Display Programme", 1945.

³Recreational and Physical Education Branch, advertising flyer for Pro-Rec centres, n.d. (Keatley Collection).

⁴Recreational and Physical Education Branch, printed ticket for Pro-Rec picnic, n.d. (Ruben Collection).

⁵Letter to G.M. Weir, Minister of Education, Victoria, from Ian Eisenhardt, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, December 22nd, 1936 [PABC:8.9.4 - 8.9.5 g].

⁶Letter to Norman McLarty, Minister of Labour, Ottawa, from Ian Eisenhardt, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, December 13th, 1939 [PAC: RG 27/Vol. 698/712-1-8, Sec. 8].

PLATE XII



Pro-Rec "V" Emblem (Mass Display
Programme, 1947)

armed services.¹ A final attempt to launch the tour was made by Mathisen in 1945, with the War coming to an end. He proposed that Eisenhardt again request the use of railway cars, but none was available.² Mathisen apparently presented his idea to the National Council on Physical Fitness, and received an adverse reaction from many members.³ Nothing further was heard of this project.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL PROGRAMMES

In May, 1939, the federal *Youth Training Act* was passed, and became the funding authority for grants to provinces participating in the various Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Programmes established during the 1930's. Physical fitness was supported by this Act, and Pro-Rec received funds to supplement those granted by the British Columbia government.⁴

The *Youth Training Act* covered a three-year period, from 1939 to 1944, and as the expiration date of the act approached, it became evident that another source of funds would be needed, if the federal-provincial schemes were to continue. Also, demands for training in activities related to the War demonstrated the need for an expansion of

¹Letter to C.D. Howe, Minister of Transport, Ottawa, from Raddell, Secretary, Railway Association of Canada, February 12th, 1940 [PAC: RG 27/698/Y12-1-8/Sec. 6].

²Letter to Jerry Mathisen, Pro-Rec Director, from Ian Eisenhardt, National Physical Fitness Director, Ottawa, June 12th, 1945 [PAC: RG 29/826/214-1-9/Pt. 1].

³Letter to Ian Eisenhardt, National Physical Fitness Director, Ottawa, from Jerry Mathisen, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, December 29th, 1945 [PAC: RG 29/826/214-1-9/Pt. 1].

⁴*Supra*, pp. 175-176.

projects in addition to those supported by the *Youth Training Act*. As a result of these needs, the War Emergency Training Programme was established in 1940, encompassing projects in the Youth Training Act, as well as ten other war-related programmes.¹ During the fiscal year 1941-42, the Youth Training Programme continued, on a reduced scale because of increased employment. On March 31st, 1942, the *Youth Training Act* expired, and in August of that year, the *Vocational Training Co-ordination Act* was passed, to provide for the continuation of youth training projects.

With the elimination of the unemployment clause, funding was reduced even further. Under this new act, co-operating provinces received grants for physical training for two more years.² In British Columbia, Pro-Rec applied its federal funds to the same kinds of expenses as had been covered during the 1930's, although there was a significant reduction in monies received. In 1939-40, the federal grant was \$19,000, but from 1941 to 1943, only \$10,000 was awarded each year.³ Because these federal grants were matched by the province, grants to Pro-Rec from the B.C. government were also reduced. Further reductions resulted from the general austerity policies applied to all civilian activities during the War.

National Physical Fitness Act

In 1943, the federal government enacted its first major piece of

¹Andrews, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-118.

²"Summary of Youth Training and Recreation Programmes, 1936-1945", typewritten notes, 2 pp., n.d. [PAC: RG 29/775/File #30].

³See Appendix E.

legislation dealing specifically with physical recreation. This was the *National Physical Fitness Act*, and it served as a source of matching funds for governments until it was repealed in 1954.¹ The principal object of the act was:

. . . to promote the physical fitness of the people of Canada through the extension of physical education in schools, universities and other institutions . . . ; to train teachers, lecturers and demonstrators; and to organize sports and athletics on a nation-wide scale.²

This object was to be achieved by the provision of funds on a matching basis to provinces participating in the programme, and by the appointment of a National Council on Physical Fitness and a National Director of Physical Fitness to initiate and implement proposals related to the object.³

The new act was the result of many influences. The first came from a Health Committee of the League of Nations which recommended, in 1937, that member countries establish national committees on physical fitness.⁴ Also, examples had been set by other countries, notably Australia and the United States, and these had some impact in Canada.⁵ The most important reason given for establishing a national physical fitness programme was the "deplorable state of fitness of Canadians as

¹For a complete history of the *National Physical Fitness Act*, see: Lorne Sawula, "The National Physical Fitness Act of Canada, 1943 - 1954", unpublished Ph.D. thesis, The University of Alberta, 1977.

²J.J. Heagerty, "The National Physical Fitness Act", *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, XXXIV:10 (October, 1943), p. 466.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 466-467.

⁴Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, July 21st, 1943, p. 5188.

⁵Heagerty, *op. cit.*, p. 468. Great Britain had also established a National Fitness Council in 1937, but this was disbanded with the outbreak of war in 1939. Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

revealed by the numbers rejected for military service."¹ As early as 1941, references had been made in the House of Commons to the poor physical condition of civilians offering their services for military duty; in one example given, approximately one-third of air crew enlistment hopefuls were "unfit to walk five miles."² Again, in 1943, in support of his resolution to establish a council for the promotion of physical fitness, Ian Mackenzie, Minister of Pensions and National Health, stated that:

In Canada we are naturally a hardy people, but the war has brought to light great defects in our physical education and our educational system generally.³

Sawula notes that early drafts of the new *Act* had entitled it the *National War Fitness Act*, an indication of the importance of wartime military rejections in the preparation of the *Act*.⁴

To the list of influences on the *National Physical Fitness Act* should be added that which Gear describes as "internal pressure resulting from some provincial success in this area".⁵ In large part, this provincial success was the British Columbia Pro-Rec programme, which Sawula cites as the model from which the federal programme was designed.⁶ In 1940, at the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Conference held in Ottawa, Eisenhardt was invited to report on physical Fitness projects

¹Gear, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

²Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, March 17th, 1941, p. 1606.

³Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, July 21st, 1943, p. 5189.

⁴Sawula, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

⁵Gear, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁶Sawula, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

in B.C.,¹ and he presented tentative plans for a Canadian national fitness campaign, linked with the national war effort.² This was not the first time that Eisenhardt had presented his ideas for a national scheme to federal officials; he had written to the Department of Labour on this topic many times since 1937.³

By 1942, Mackenzie was beginning to formulate a national fitness scheme, and proposed this at a meeting of provincial health ministers convened on September 21st in Ottawa. He invited Eisenhardt to address the meeting and outline the British Columbia programme,⁴ and the *National Physical Fitness Act* was drafted subsequent to this meeting.⁵ That Mackenzie was modelling his proposal after Pro-Rec was also seen in a statement made by him in Vancouver six weeks before his meeting with the provincial ministers, when he referred to a plan to improve the health of future servicemen, and stated that, while he was not yet ready with details, he believed that the programme would "follow closely the general idea of Pro-Rec work in this province."⁶

¹Letter to Ian Eisenhardt, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, from R.F. Thompson, Superintendent of Youth Training, Department of Labour, Ottawa, January 30th, 1940 [PAC: RG 27/698/Y12-1-8/Sec. 6].

²Ian Eisenhardt, "Resume of Discussions Pertaining to Physical Education, Recreation and Health, Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Conference, Ottawa, January 22nd to 24th, 1940", in letter to R.F. Thompson, Superintendent of Youth Training, Department of Labour, Ottawa, February 27th, 1940 [PAC: RG 27/698/Y12-1-8/Sec. 6].

³Letter to Norman McLarty, Minister of Labour, Ottawa, from R.F. Thompson, Superintendent of Youth Training, Department of Labour, Ottawa, November 1st, 1939 [PAC: RG 27/398/Y12-1-8/Sec. 6].

⁴Canada, Department of National Health and Welfare, "Minutes of the Meeting of Provincial Health Ministers", Ottawa, September 21st, 1942 [PAC: RG 29/822/210-8-1/Pt. 1].

⁵Sawula, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-64.

⁶*Daily Province*, August 11th, 1942, p. 10.

In a 1943 address to the Special Committee on Social Security, Mackenzie urged that committee to support his department's proposal for a programme of physical fitness, and gave further indication of his support of the Pro-Rec concept in the following statement:

British Columbia has for some years had a program of physical fitness . . . known as 'Pro-Rec'. This program did a wonderful work among the unemployed youth in the depression period. Tens of thousands participated in organized recreational activities I have seen thousands engaged in a single demonstration in the public parks of Vancouver. The sight was comparable to that of the famous Czech "Sokols". Whether this European type of physical education is entirely suited to the genius of all our peoples may be questioned, but it certainly was a success in British Columbia.¹

In 1944, when the first National Director of Physical Fitness was named by Mackenzie, he chose Eisenhardt for this position. In support of this appointment, Mackenzie told the House of Commons that:

Major Eisenhardt was selected from a group engaged in the field of sports, games and recreation as the person whose training and experience, together with his actual achievements, qualified him best for the post.²

When Eisenhardt resigned from this position in 1946, G.F. Davidson, Deputy Minister of Welfare expressed thanks to him for his contribution, and referred to Eisenhardt's excellent work with Pro-Rec in B.C., describing it as "a work which was largely responsible for bringing into being the physical fitness programme on a national scale."³

From these statements made by federal authorities, it is evident

¹Haegerty, *op. cit.*, p. 469.

²Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, June 15th, 1944, p. 3831.

³Canada, Department of National Health and Welfare, National Council on Physical Fitness, "Digest of the Minutes of the Sixth Meeting of the National Council on Physical Fitness", Ottawa, October 15th to 18th, 1946, p. 2. [PAC: RG 29/778/File No. 99].

that Pro-Rec, under Eisenhardt's leadership, served as the internal model for the national fitness scheme, and that the existence of a successful provincial programme aided the government in its presentation of legislation for the scheme. It is also clear, from an examination of the House of Commons debates, that there was little opposition to the proposal, and, in the debate, Pro-Rec was cited by a member of another political party as a fine example of the kind of physical fitness programme possible under government auspices.¹

So that Pro-Rec could participate in the new federal-provincial scheme, the British Columbia Legislature passed enabling legislation, in March, 1944, authorizing the Government of British Columbia to enter into agreements with federal ministers relative to the *National Physical Fitness Act*, with the provincial Minister of Education responsible for the execution of the programme.² An agreement was signed, and British Columbia, along with other participating provinces, received its first grant under the new federal programme for the fiscal year 1944-45.³ This grant of \$16,015.75 represented a substantial increase from the previous grant of \$10,000, but the net gain for Pro-Rec that year was only \$4,000, as provincial contributions were reduced by \$2,000.⁴ Perhaps more important than the increase in funds was the fact that Pro-Rec was receiving its federal grant from a programme directly responsible

¹This was A. MacInnes, Member for Vancouver East. Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, July 21st, 1943, p. 5196.

²British Columbia, Legislative Assembly, *Statutes, National Physical Fitness Enabling Act*, March 15th, 1944. See Appendix K for full text.

³Sawula, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

⁴See Appendix E.

for physical fitness rather than as one of a series of youth training projects related to unemployment problems. This federal recognition of the importance of physical fitness *per se* gave additional prestige to the Pro-Rec programme.

Although the National Council on Physical Fitness, at its first meeting, passed a resolution that provinces form representative advisory councils on physical fitness,¹ no such committee was ever formed in British Columbia. Mathisen, appointed B.C. representative to the National Council, reported, in 1944, that attempts were being made in this direction, but the only specific action ever taken was the establishment of a technical committee on physical fitness tests and gymnastics.²

Province of Quebec

As outlined in the previous chapter, Pro-Rec served, in varying degrees, as a model in the development of physical recreation programmes in the three Prairie provinces, during the late 1930's. Strong interest was also demonstrated by representatives of the government of Quebec during 1940. In January of that year, following the Youth Training Conference in Ottawa, Eisenhardt was invited to Montreal to meet with the Quebec Minister of Trade and Commerce, M. Drouin.³ Pro-Rec films were shown, and details of the programme were presented by Eisenhardt.

¹Sawula, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

²Letter to Ian Eisenhardt, National Physical Fitness Director, Ottawa, from Jerry Mathisen, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, July 3rd, 1944 [PAC: RG 29/826/214-1-9/Pt. 1].

³Letter to Norman McLarty, Minister of Labour, Ottawa, from Ian Eisenhardt, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, February 26th, 1940 [PAC: RG 27/698/Y12-1-8/Sec. 7].

Quebec officials expressed interest in Pro-Rec, and indicated that money had been appropriated for the training of physical recreation instructors.¹ During the summer of 1940, several Quebec instructors attended the Pro-Rec Summer School;² according to Eisenhardt, these instructors were to introduce a similar programme in Quebec.³ Although Quebec officials were interested in establishing a physical fitness programme, that province did not participate in the National Physical Fitness scheme, for reasons of provincial autonomy.⁴

SPECIAL FEATURES

Danish Gymnastics Team

Very early in this period, in October, 1939, Vancouver was visited by a touring Danish schoolboys gymnastics team. Aged fourteen to eighteen, these twenty-four young exponents of Niels Bukh's system presented two demonstrations for Vancouver audiences, leaving spectators thrilled with their performances. Their second exhibition was accompanied by a Pro-Rec demonstration, and on that occasion, the Danish boys were introduced to a piece of apparatus foreign to them — the gymnasium springboard.⁵ The large number of spectators, two thousand, demonstrated the continued interest of Vancouver citizens in top-calibre gymnastics displays, stimulated in part by their familiarity with Pro-Rec displays.

¹Vancouver Sun, February 7th, 1940, p. 24.

²Daily Province, August 6th, 1940, p. 9.

³Public Schools Report, 1939-40, p. 90.

⁴McFarland, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

⁵Vancouver Sun, October 11th, 1939, p. 9.

The Problem of Juvenile Delinquency

Toward the end of the War, the social problem loosely referred to as "juvenile delinquency" developed to such a magnitude that public leaders and government officials began to publicly express their concern and to search for solutions. It is generally believed that the disruption of the family unit was the chief cause of this problem. In many families with teen-aged children, the father was in the armed services and the mother was employed, often on a night shift. Left unsupervised, some children formed street gangs which often engaged in illegal activities. At the very least, these groups were a nuisance, and a disruption to the neighbourhood.

Physical recreation was commonly cited as one of the best means of preventing juvenile delinquency, and the public demand for youth centres began at this time. Many leaders felt that Pro-Rec was ideally suited to assist in the solution of this problem. In October, 1944, the Vancouver City Council gave \$1,000 to Pro-Rec in support of the junior programme, because the Council felt that this programme could help prevent juvenile delinquency.¹ That year, The Honourable John Hart, Premier of British Columbia, also spoke in favour of Pro-Rec as an answer to this growing problem.² Partly in response to this situation, Pro-Rec staff began to organize community recreation councils, and as the War drew to a close, plans were being made to establish community centres in many parts of B.C.³

¹*Daily Province*, October 13th, 1944, p. 6.

²*Public Schools Report*, 1944-45, p. 136.

³Canada, Department of National Health and Welfare, National Council of Physical Fitness, "Annual Report, 1944-45" (mimeographed), Ottawa, 1945, p. 59.

The Development of Community Centres

McFarland states that "it was during and following the Second World War that community center development received its greatest impetus."¹ A number of factors contributed to the growing interest in this concept, one of which was the widespread acceptance by Canadians that the community centre would be an appropriate means of commemorating those who gave their lives during the War. The growing recognition of the need for suitable recreational programmes for young people, especially as a deterrent to juvenile delinquency, was another important reason for support of these new centres. Finally, the centre was seen as an attractive opportunity for members of all age groups to become active participants in community affairs.²

In general, a community centre was built and supported by funds from private and public sources. The methods of financing the building varied between communities, but usually involved some taxation. Centres served villages, towns, rural districts, or portions of a large city, and were managed by employees of a municipal recreation council or park board. The programme of a centre was designed to meet the leisure-time needs and interests of the community it served, and invariably included a large physical recreation component. Social events, arts and crafts, drama groups, and other recreational activities were also important features of the programme.

In British Columbia, Pro-Rec had been meeting some of the needs for which future community centres would assume responsibility, and

¹McFarland, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

²Canadian Youth Commission, *Youth and Recreation, op. cit.*, p. 143.

Pro-Rec centres were the only physical recreation centres available to many communities. As the War years passed, and as the public became more aware of the necessity of providing a broad recreation programme, the Pro-Rec administration was subject to pressures to encourage and develop community centres throughout B.C. In its annual report for 1942-43, the Executive Board of Pro-Rec stated that "community and public-spirited organizations have shown a greatly increased interest in the provision of physical fitness and recreational opportunities."¹ The annual report for the following year indicated that this interest was rising steadily, and that communities which had previously shown little enthusiasm for this work were starting to organize groups to provide more recreation for their citizens. Reference was made in that report to the concept of providing utilitarian war memorials, once construction became possible.² Taking an early lead in this field, the town of Nelson, in the Kootenays district, opened its municipal civic centre in the fall of 1942, presenting an extensive sports and recreation programme in co-operation with local Pro-Rec instructors.³

In 1944, the National Council on Physical Fitness, in its first meeting, passed a number of important resolutions and established the directions that it would take in its development of physical fitness in Canada. Implicit in many of these resolutions was the assumption that provinces would encourage the establishment of community programmes.⁴

¹Public Schools Report, 1942-43, p. 108.

²Public Schools Report, 1943-44, p. 124.

³Canadian Physical Education Association, *Bulletin*, X:2 (December, 1942), p. 7; see also *Public Schools Report*, 1943-44, p. 128.

⁴Sawula, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-89.

In 1944, Mathisen, as British Columbia representative to that Council, recommended that plans for community centres should be made available by the Council to assist communities in these building programmes.¹

During the 1944-45 season, Pro-Rec was also directed by its Minister of Education, H.G.T. Perry, to place greater emphasis on recreation work in communities where none had been previously organized. This request, along with the anticipated return of men and women from the armed forces, and the growing concern about juvenile delinquency, prompted Mathisen to draw up a master plan for the organization of community recreation councils throughout B.C.² This master plan called for the organization of the province into seven divisions, with each division in turn divided into districts comprising a number of communities. The number of communities forming a district would vary according to population density and geographical conditions. As conceived in 1944, the communities would bear the major share of expenses in conducting a programme.³

Under the Mathisen plan, each community recreation council would attempt to achieve the following objectives:

- (a) To promote sports, recreation and physical fitness activities among the people, young and old, in the community.
- (b) To be responsible for raising money through avenues of revenue such as: (1) Local appropriations, (2) contributions, private and business, (3) tag days, (4) nominal fees, (5) sports revenue, (6) social revenue.

¹Canada, Department of National Health and Welfare, National Council on Physical Fitness, *Bulletin No. 3*, op. cit., p. 51.

²Public Schools Report, 1944-45, pp. 136-137.

³Ibid.

- (c) To allocate monies for sports participation, equipment, rentals, improvements, etc.
- (d) To work in co-operation with the Government sponsored Physical Fitness Program particularly with regard to instructors, coaches, and leaders.
- (e) To improve outdoor and indoor facilities.
- (f) Policy: (1) Appointments of Activities chairmen for Social Groups, Cultural Groups, Sports Groups, (2) Correlation of Activities, (3) special events, tournaments, socials, hikes, camping tours, etc.¹

Ideally, a community centre would be located within half a mile of every home, and available for the entire community throughout the year; it would adjoin the local school and be accessible for its use. Facilities provided by the centre would include: an auditorium, a large gymnasium and a smaller one, special areas for activities such as boxing and wrestling, adequate dressing rooms, a swimming pool, playrooms for small games and social activities, arts and crafts rooms, a meeting room, kitchen facilities, office space, and a suite for the caretaker.²

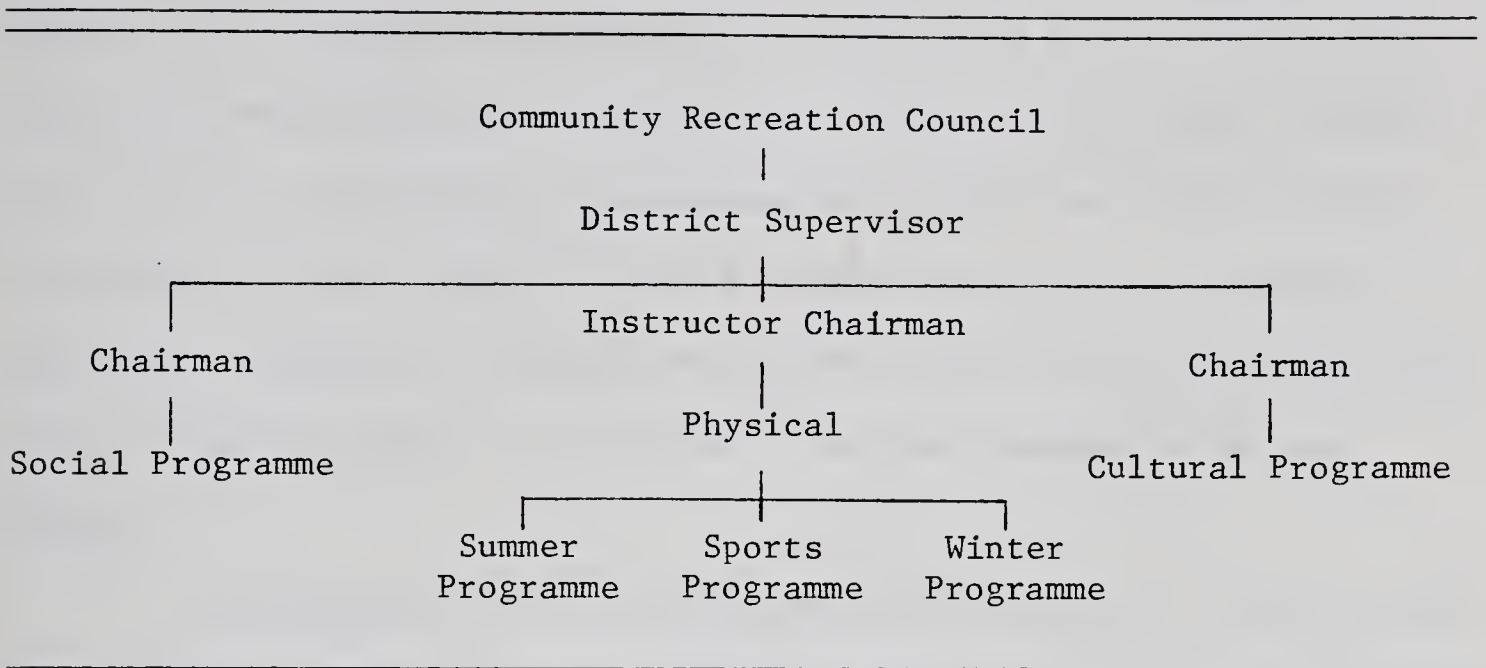
Figure 2 illustrates the line of responsibilities and the division of activities in a typical community centre. Mathisen envisioned these centres operating in conjunction with Pro-Rec. The district supervisor would be employed by Pro-Rec and would supervise the programmes in a number of communities in his or her district. The Instructor Chairman would also be an employee of Pro-Rec, probably corresponding to the regular instructor of a Pro-Rec centre; this Instructor Chairman would work with the local community recreation council, under the supervision of the District Supervisor.³

¹Canada, Department of National Health and Welfare, National Council on Physical Fitness, *Bulletin No. 2*, op. cit., p. 36.

²*Ibid.*, p. 37.

³Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Brief Explanation of Community Recreational, Sports and Physical Fitness Programs" (mimeographed), Vancouver, n.d., p. 3.

FIGURE 2

SUGGESTED ORGANIZATION OF A COMMUNITY RECREATION COUNCIL¹

The implementation of Mathisen's master plan during this period was minimal, because communities were unable to obtain materials to construct community centres while Canada was still at war; lack of financial capabilities was also a serious obstacle.² In spite of these drawbacks, some progress was being made as the War drew to an end. In June, 1945, Mathisen reported that three communities in British Columbia, Ocean Falls, Prince George, and Prince Rupert, had announced their intentions to hire full-time recreation directors.³

¹*Ibid.*, p. 38. This is a modification of Mathisen's plan; he also listed specific activities under each programme component, and these activities corresponded to the ones presented in most Pro-Rec centres.

²Canada, Department of National Health and Welfare, National Council on Physical Fitness, "Annual Report - 1944-45" (mimeographed), Ottawa, 1945, p. 59.

³Letter to Ian Eisenhardt, National Director of Physical Fitness, Ottawa, from Jerry Mathisen, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, June 1st, 1945 [PAC: RG 29/826/214-1-9/Pt. 1].

SUMMARY

During the six years of World War II, Pro-Rec was forced to adjust to the disruptive conditions that developed in a wartime society. Membership was affected by the enlistment of men in the armed services, and a general curtailment of non-essential civilian activities reduced the amount of funds granted by the provincial government. Many new programmes and types of centres were added during this time, to meet the needs of special groups and to provide services related to the war effort.

The fundamental nature of the Pro-Rec programme, its administration and its activities, did not change significantly. Eisenhardt left Pro-Rec for active service early in 1941, and presented his permanent resignation in 1944. For most of the War years, Pro-Rec operated without an official leader.

The promulgation of the *National Physical Fitness Act* in 1943 stimulated Pro-Rec, both financially and administratively. More centres were established, and a strong junior membership was developed. Pro-Rec and Eisenhardt played a significant role in the creation of this new federal programme.

Public awareness of the importance of suitable community recreation programmes grew as the War reached its mid-point, and proposals to establish community centres received strong support from governments and from service organizations. Pro-Rec administrators began to work toward the creation of community recreation councils, with Pro-Rec employees closely involved in these projects. In some communities, however, Pro-Rec encountered opposition from individuals and groups who

felt that the Pro-Rec centres were a closed organization, on a par with and providing opposition to private sports and recreation clubs. The Executive Board of Pro-Rec, under pressure from this criticism, stated that, quite contrary to these claims, the policies of the Branch were to support and assist such private clubs, and to provide programmes where no group or club was operating.¹

When World War II started, in 1939, Pro-Rec was a depression-oriented organization, serving those who could not otherwise participate in a programme of physical recreation. Within a few months of the outbreak of the War, Pro-Rec had changed its emphasis to that of providing opportunities for citizens to develop the level of physical fitness necessary for wartime commitments. By the end of this period, Pro-Rec was concentrating on the provision of physical recreation to help combat juvenile delinquency and to give all citizens worthwhile leisure time activities.

¹Public Schools Report, 1943-44, p. 124.

CHAPTER V

POST-WAR DEVELOPMENTS IN PRO-REC: 1945 TO 1953

The post-war period, for Canada in general, and for British Columbia in particular, is difficult to define and label, unlike the previous periods which were characterized by specific economic and political conditions. One cause of this difficulty is the comparative nearness in time to this study; historical objectivity and analysis are more difficult to attain with events that occurred a mere twenty-five to thirty years ago. Because of this, most published descriptions of the late 1940's and early 1950's are presented as comparisons to the War and the Depression, and the post-war period is viewed as a reaction to those tragedies.

The relief felt by Canadians after the War ended, coupled with the realization that the economy had improved and stabilized, produced a positive outlook and a desire for expansion and improvement in all facets of life that had been denied to most Canadians for fifteen years. This desire for a better life was supported by two important products of the War itself: a stronger industrial and technological base to the economy; and an increase in the competencies and expertise of a large segment of the population as the result of skills and experiences gained in wartime and service work. The realization that a better life was possible and that individuals had more options in their lives produced an entirely different kind of society, in a new and more confident Canada.

The end of the War ushered in a period of tranquility and prosperity, which also saw swift and significant changes that transformed the daily lives of Canadians.¹ By 1947, the economy was buoyant, employment was high, and the gross national product had risen significantly.² The population increased, along with growth in urbanization and industrialization.³ There was a better distribution of wealth than before the War,⁴ and people demanded more social assistance from governments.⁵ This was a time of mass trends and of changes in consumption patterns, when Canadians became less concerned with the "older production-centred values of thrift and caution" and started to take advantage of more widespread affluence and leisure.⁶ One of the most important post-war developments was the increased private use of the automobile, "one of the prime symbols and facts in the vast economic and social change of the mid century."⁷ The growth in mobility and freedom provided by car transportation gave an entirely different dimension to leisure activities. Another major technological development of this period was television, and although its full impact on Canadian society would not

¹Alexander Ross, *The Booming Fifties: 1950/1960, Canada's Illustrated Heritage* (Toronto: National Science of Canada Limited, 1977), p. 7.

²C.P. Stacey, "Through the Second World War", in *The Canadians: 1867-1967*, edited by J.M.S. Careless and R.M. Brown (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1968), p. 297.

³*Ibid.*, p. 298.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 316.

⁵Ormsby, *British Columbia: A History*, *op. cit.*, p. 486.

⁶Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

⁷William Kilbourn, "The 1950's", in Careless and Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

be felt until after 1953,¹ Vancouver citizens were receiving signals from Seattle as early as 1948.²

Not all of the post-war developments were positive ones, unfortunately. This was also the era of the Cold War, of Canadian soldiers fighting in the Korean police action,³ and of the fears and tensions of McCarthyism.⁴ Vancouver's first atomic bomb shelter was installed in 1950.⁵

One important new feature of post-war life in large cities such as Vancouver was a growing cosmopolitanism, caused in part by the changed attitudes of returning servicemen who had "seen the world". Another cause of this change was the massive influx of immigrants, many of whom were "political refugees from most of the countries of Europe, including a large proportion of 'displaced persons' left behind in the camps of Germany and Occupied Europe."⁶ Because political refugees are generally urban dwellers from the better-educated strata of their original societies, they tend to integrate more quickly and to have a greater impact upon the culture of their new home, and in B.C. this was especially true of the post-World War II immigrants.⁷ The increased

¹The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation started broadcasting in Toronto and Montreal in 1952 (Ross, *op. cit.*, inside front cover); the first Vancouver broadcast was made in December, 1953 (Chuck Davis, *The Vancouver Book* (Vancouver: J.J. Douglas Ltd., 1976), p. 14).

²Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

³Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

⁴A. Kloppenborg, *et al* (ed.), *Vancouver's First Century: A City Album 1860-1960* (Vancouver: J.J. Douglas, Ltd., 1977), p.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 141.

⁶Norris, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 11.

cosmopolitanism was certainly a factor in the changed view that Canadians came to have about restrictive legislation for Sunday sports and entertainment. In 1950, the city of Toronto voted to allow professional sports on Sundays, and this started a chain-reaction of similar votes across Canada during the next few years.¹

In British Columbia, a significant political event occurred toward the end of the period under study, with important implications for Pro-Rec. The provincial election of July, 1952, brought an end to the coalition of Liberals and Conservatives that had been formed in 1941 to keep the Socialist party out of power. A new party, labelled Social Credit and led by former Conservative member W.A.C. Bennett, obtained a plurality of votes in the 1952 election and was asked to form the government.² Bennett and his supporters had campaigned on a platform that included a promise to eliminate "the frills", and when the first complete Social Credit budget was presented in February, 1953, Pro-Rec was included among those frills slated for substantial reductions in financial support.³

During this post-war period, Canadians lived in a society markedly different from that of the Depression and the War. It was an affluent society, increasingly urban and cosmopolitan, and with few worries, if the Cold War could be ignored. A better distribution of wealth produced increasing amounts of leisure time, and the automobile provided more opportunities for the use of that leisure time. As

¹Barbara Schrodt, "Sabbatarianism and Sport in Canadian Society", *Journal of Sport History*, IV:1 (Spring, 1977), p. 30.

²Ormsby, *op. cit.*, pp. 487-488.

³*Daily Province*, February 19th, 1953, p. 1.

Kilbourn states:

Perhaps most people were simply content to live in decent and comfortable obscurity, aspiring to an affluence almost within reach, and to think as little as possible about the searing experiences of depression and global war that they had lived through . . . and might momentarily be plunged into again.¹

In this new society, Pro-Rec was subject to pressures for change that altered the basic objectives of the programme. Eventually, a serious re-examination of the total programme was undertaken, and by 1953, Pro-Rec was replaced by a new Branch serving quite different needs in adult recreation. This chapter examines these changes and documents the events that led to the dissolution of Pro-Rec.

GENERAL DEVELOPMENTS

Introduction

With the end of the War, Pro-Rec entered a period of uncertainty, marked by a general lack of leadership, particularly from the provincial government. Attempts were made to bring the Recreational and Physical Education Branch into closer contact with the schools and community centres, attempts that met with only qualified success. The basic programme remained essentially unchanged from that of the 1930's, and a degree of inflexibility became apparent; Pro-Rec continued to provide physical recreation opportunities at a time when society wanted more from its recreation programmes. But some new programmes were introduced and expanded, specifically the sponsorship of inter-high school sports competition and the encouragement and support of new community councils.

As early as 1946, indications of impending change were appearing.

¹Kilbourn, *op. cit.*, p. 310.

That year, the Canadian Youth Commission published its report, *Youth and Recreation*, and called for a:

. . . broad programme rich in content, free of ideas of mass displays, and focussed on the full cultural development of all our Canadian young people.¹

Also, in that same year, George Weir, once again British Columbia Minister of Education, called a meeting of the representatives of sixty Vancouver organizations to discuss a major policy change with respect to the province-wide co-ordination of recreation. Schools, youth groups, women's and church associations, the City Council, and the Park Board were among those groups represented. They discussed the kind of co-operation necessary to implement community centre programmes under the Department of Education and based on precepts of the *National Physical Fitness Act*.² A few months later, Ernest Lee was appointed Pro-Rec Director, and a major shift in policy was effected in the Recreational and Physical Education Branch. By 1951, the worth and value of Pro-Rec was being questioned, and a committee was struck to investigate its entire operation. Then, in 1953, the final action was taken when Pro-Rec was dissolved and replaced by a new government service, the Community Programmes Branch.

In April, 1946, with the appointment of Lee, the Recreational and Physical Education Branch was expanded to include active involvement with community centres and with school health and physical education.³ This placed Pro-Rec in a different administrative position; where it had

¹Canadian Youth Commission, *Youth and Recreation*, op. cit., p. 76.

²*Vancouver Sun*, February 2nd, 1946, p. 3.

³*Public Schools Report*, 1945-46, p. 137.

been the only concern of the Branch before, it now became one of three concerns, all directed by Lee. Technically, these three areas were separate, but the lines between each were so indefinite as to be non-existent in some situations.

Lee changed the direction of Pro-Rec while he served as Director,¹ eliminated many of the conflicts with schools, and gave the Branch an active role in the establishment of new community centres throughout the province. The following excerpt from his first annual report as Director indicates the kinds of changes he was seeking, and some of the reasons for these changes:

On April 1st, 1946 it became the dominant policy of this department to co-ordinate rather than control recreation throughout the Province. In some rural communities attempts had been made to awaken an awareness of district responsibility in providing recreation. In urban centres this was not being done. On investigation it was found that often physical recreation offered by the Provincial Government centres duplicated programmes of other neighbouring agencies. Such duplication was obviously wasteful of finance, facilities, and leadership. It also had the regrettable result of fostering among recreational workers an underlying resentment and suspicion rather than a feeling of mutual help and understanding.²

That Lee was successful in achieving his objectives may be seen from the last annual report for the programme, submitted in 1953 by Lee's successor, R.J. "Bus" Phillips. In addition to the operation of regular Pro-Rec centres and the annual Pro-Rec Summer School, the Branch gave grants to community centres, operated recreation programmes for the blind, sent travelling sports clinics throughout the province, distributed materials from the National Fitness Office, gave advice and

¹Interview with R.J. Phillips, May 10th, 1977.

²*Public Schools Report*, 1945-46, p. 137.

guidance to community groups, made its board room and stenographic facilities available to amateur sports associations, and encouraged staff members to serve on boards and committees of sports and recreation organizations so as to enhance Pro-Rec public relations.¹

The registration figures for this period fluctuated sharply, and unlike the previous period, the reasons for these fluctuations are not readily perceivable. Also, it is not possible to analyze the figures by sex because, starting in 1945-46, this information was no longer included in the annual reports. This is a reflection of the philosophy brought to Pro-Rec by Lee, for one of his objectives was to repair the schism between the men's and women's sections.² The following year, registrations at organized community centres were listed separately, again reflecting part of Lee's emphasis.

An examination of Table 16 reveals a drop in Pro-Rec membership in 1946-47, but this is accounted for by the figures for community centres. The further decrease for 1947-48 is not as easily explained, and no reference is made to this in any official reports. On the whole, the enrollment at Pro-Rec centres seems to have stabilized, varying between approximately fourteen thousand and eighteen thousand from 1946 to 1953. This is significantly lower than the peak enrollment of twenty-five thousand for the first post-war year,³ and may be indicative of a general lowering of public interest in physical fitness. A delayed

¹*Public Schools Report*, 1952-53, pp. 124-125.

²Interview with Ernest Lee, June 28th, 1976.

³This figure was given in the *Public Schools Report* of 1945-46 (pp. 137-138) as the highest enrollment in the history of Pro-Rec. The higher figure of 26,831 for 1938-39 was inflated because of the method of calculating enrollment during the 1930's (see fn. no.2, *supra*, p. 192).

TABLE 16

PRO-REC REGISTRATIONS: 1944-45 TO 1952-53¹

Year	Pro-Rec	Community Centres	Total
1944-45	19,142	---	19,142
1945-46	25,013	---	25,013
1946-47	17,331	6,448	23,779
1947-48 ²	14,042	5,241	19,283
1948-49	17,283	7,305	24,588
1949-50	13,707	7,007	20,714
1950-51	16,921	8,130	25,051
1951-52	17,695	24,562	42,257
1952-53	18,591	---	18,591

reaction of one year, after which many people realized that there was no longer an urgent wartime need to keep fit, could account for this pattern of registration. It should also be noted that no figures for community centre enrollment were given for 1952-53. The tripling of that enrollment in 1951-52 coincides with the opening of Vancouver's first full community centres, and it would no doubt be evident to Pro-Rec administrators that registrations at the community centres of the province no longer held any meaning for Pro-Rec reports.

¹See Appendix D; see also *Public Schools Reports*, 1946-47 to 1952-53.

²*Infra*, p. 267, fn. no. 2.

Centres

The number of centres operating during this period varied with enrollments; the largest number, for 1945-46, coincided with the year of highest enrollment. Table 17 illustrates these variations, with numbers

TABLE 17

NUMBERS OF PRO-REC CENTRES: 1944-45 TO 1952-53¹

Year	Pro-Rec Centres	Community Centres	Total
1944-45	249		249
1945-46	277		277
1946-47	202	11	213
1947-48 ²	202(?)	9	211
1948-49	197	8	205
1949-50	185	10	195
1950-51	240	13	253
1951-52	244	12	256
1952-53	213	12	225

¹See Appendix D.

²There is reason to question the figures given for 1947-48. It will be noted that the number of Pro-Rec centres (202) is the same as for 1946-47. An examination of British Columbia reports to the Physical Fitness Division for those two years reveals a number of repetitions; not only were the centres the same for both years, but also the winter registrations (94,021), and the numbers of full-time staff and part-time instructors (17 and 85 respectively) (Physical Fitness Division "Annual Report", 1946-47, p. 3 [mimeographed], and 1946-48, p. 13 [mimeographed]). Given the fluctuations in these variables since 1934, it is highly unlikely that they would be the same for two consecutive years. It is the opinion of this writer that one or more errors in reporting were made for 1947-48, and that all of the figures in Tables 16 and 17 for that year should be taken as approximations.

decreasing in 1946-47 and rising again in 1950-51. Community centres receiving grants from the Recreational and Physical Education Branch were listed from 1946-47 onwards. Also, beginning with that same season, winter and summer centres were no longer reported separately, and it is difficult to know how much attention was given to the summer programme at this time. The large decrease in 1946-47 is accounted for, in part, by a significant reduction in the number of rural centres. Where Pro-Rec had operated in sixty-four rural communities in 1945-46,¹ that was reduced to thirty-one in 1946-47.² Eleven communities established community centres serving the same function as Pro-Rec centres,³ but this does not account for all of the difference.

One important feature of the post-war period was the relative increase in centres for junior members, and Table 18 illustrates this, with a comparison of the Greater Vancouver district programmes for three different years. From 1946-47 to 1950-51, significant increases in junior men's and junior women's centres occurred, accounting for a large portion of the total increase in centres; the increase for junior men was particularly large. A fairly large decrease is seen for 1952-53, the last year of Pro-Rec operation, and the total men's programme re-trenched more than that for women. Another important change was that for special sports centres, which, together with mixed centres, were the only kinds to increase toward the end. Mixed centres were stressed after Lee became Director, and were administered by the men's section.⁴

¹Public Schools Report, 1945-46, pp. 139-140.

²Public Schools Report, 1946-47, p. 129.

³*Ibid.*, p. 130.

⁴Letter to men's staff of Pro-Rec from Jerry Mathisen, Provincial Supervisor for Men (mimeographed), Vancouver, February 22nd, 1950 (Keatley Collection).

TABLE 18

COMPARISON OF TYPES OF CENTRES IN GREATER VANCOUVER:
POST-WAR PERIOD¹

Type	1946-47	1950-51	1952-53
Senior Men	16	19	14
Junior Men	11	26	14
Senior Women	30	40	36
Junior Women	14	22	21
Sports Centres	10	20	23
Mixed Centres	3	2	5
Total	84	129	113

While centres relating to wartime activities stopped when the War ended, many special centres inaugurated during that period continued to operate. These included centres at: the Indian schools, particularly St. Mary's school in Mission; the Oakalla Prison Farm and New Haven Borstal Home penal institutions; and the White Cane clubs sponsored by the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.² In 1945, Pro-Rec classes were started at a number of Catholic parochial schools in the Greater Vancouver district; each week the instructor responsible

¹Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "1946-47: Pro-Rec Centres in Greater Vancouver", Vancouver (Keatley Collection); "1950-51: Pro-Rec Centres in Greater Vancouver", Vancouver, 1950 (Ruben Collection); *Vancouver Sun*, September 29th, 1953, p. 6.

²*Public Schools Reports*, 1945-46 to 1952-53.

for the programme, Alex Strain, directed approximately one thousand school children in regular Pro-Rec activities.¹

Membership

The most important changes in membership in the post-war period were the inclusion of a growing number of individuals associated with their local community centres, and the increase in junior members. Eligibility rules were non-existent by this time, and members were asked to pay a registration fee of one dollar; the fee for juniors was twenty-five cents.²

In spite of the fact that juniors represented a very large segment of the membership, there was always some opposition to their inclusion in the Pro-Rec programme, especially in Vancouver. During the 1945-46 season, no junior classes were conducted in the city,³ although in later years, they were included. By 1952-53, certain limitations were in operation, restricting the junior programme so that it would not encroach upon school responsibilities. These limitations were:

1. Responsible sponsorship must be obtained, and school authorities must endorse the request for a junior class.
2. The junior class must be held in conjunction with a senior class, and shall not exceed one hour.
3. Junior classes may not be operated on a separate night and for a separate payable session.
4. Age limits: No child must be admitted under 8 years. When a class is growing too large for one instructor to handle the numbers should be reduced to eliminate those under 10 years.

¹Knights of Columbus, "Third Annual Catholic Grammar Schools Games Programme", Vancouver, June 11th, 1947 [PAC:RG 29/826/214-1-9/Part 2].

²Canada, Department of National Health and Welfare, Physical Fitness Division, "Annual Report: 1946-47" (mimeographed), p. 1.

³Public Schools Report, 1945-46, p. 137.

5. An average attendance of 20 members per class must be maintained to justify the continuation of the service.

Exceptions to the above must receive the approval of the Director.¹

These policies indicated a change from previous practices, particularly with respect to the lower age limit; in 1948, children aged four years had been eligible for membership.²

LEADERSHIP

In 1944, Jerry Mathisen had been appointed Director of Pro-Rec, following Eisenhardt's formal resignation.³ Mathisen continued in this position for two years, but with no significant change in the administration of the programme from the wartime period; as before, he retained his responsibilities as Provincial Supervisor for the men's programme. Then, in March, 1946, Weir announced the appointment of Ernest Lee as Director, "chosen for the important task of expanding the government physical and recreational training program and coordinating the efforts of hundreds of voluntary organizations."⁴ This appointment reflected the concern expressed earlier that year at a meeting of Vancouver leaders of recreation, education and youth groups, which had discussed the co-ordination of community recreation under the Department of Education.⁵

¹Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Pro-Rec Staff Handbook - 1952-53 Season", (mimeographed), Vancouver, p. 4 [PABC: 8.8.5f].

²*Vancouver Sun*, December 31st, 1948, magazine section, p. 10.

³*Supra*, p. 204.

⁴*Vancouver Sun*, March 11th, 1946, p. 20. Mathisen continued to supervise the men's programme.

⁵*Supra*, p. 263.

Lee was already working for the Department of Education as Provincial Supervisor of Physical Education in the schools. He was a graduate of Vancouver Normal School, the University of B.C., and the University of Oregon, holding a Bachelor of Science degree in physical education from the latter institution.¹ He had been the supervisor of physical education in the city of New Westminster, in the 1930's, and was also a Pro-Rec instructor there during that time.² In 1938, he became the physical education instructor at the Vancouver Normal School, and in 1946 was appointed Provincial Supervisor of Physical Education.³ With this background, Lee brought to his new position as Pro-Rec Director an impressive range of experience and influence within the physical education profession in B.C., something that had not been a feature of administration members up to that time. This influence, that could be used to produce better relations between Pro-Rec and physical education, was one of the chief reasons for his appointment.⁴

Lee did not resign from his position as Provincial Supervisor; he simply added Pro-Rec to his school responsibilities. This resulted in a significant change for the Pro-Rec Branch. Whereas up to this time the Branch had been synonymous with Pro-Rec, now the Branch became much more than Pro-Rec, at least while Lee was Director. School health and physical education, including the promotion of inter-high school athletic competition, became one chief division of the Branch; adult

¹Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, *Bulletin*, XVII:1 (September, 1949), p. 6.

²Interview with Ernest Lee, June 28th, 1976.

³*Bulletin*, op. cit., p. 6.

⁴Interview with Ernest Lee, June 28th, 1976.

recreation, which included Pro-Rec centres and community centres, became the other division.¹ Under this new arrangement, Pro-Rec thus became one of four programmes, where before it had been the only programme. This did not change the Pro-Rec administration significantly because Mathisen and Keatley continued to operate their programmes as before. However, finances were an important factor, especially during the first year of this expanded Branch, when all programmes were asked to operate with the same allocation as for the previous year.² In 1947, Lorne Brown was appointed Provincial Supervisor of Physical Education,³ relieving Lee of that responsibility and giving him more time to concentrate on certain assignments which he had been given by the Department of Education.

Chief among these was the need to alter the form of government involvement in recreation throughout the province. Lee's aim was to develop the Branch as a co-ordinator of recreation, rather than a controller, especially in urban centres. He also hoped to eliminate much of the duplication existing between Pro-Rec centres and programmes offered by other agencies such as the Y.M.C.A.⁴ Lee started with a certain degree of negativism in his approach to his new position, reflected in the following statement in his first general report: "The immediate objective of your Director . . . has been to eradicate any adverse

¹Public Schools Report, 1946-47, pp. 128-130.

²British Columbia, Legislative Assembly, *Sessional Papers*, 1945-46, *Estimates* - 1946-47 (Victoria: King's Printer, 1946).

³Public Schools Report, 1946-47, p. 128.

⁴Public Schools Report, 1945-46, p. 137; see also interview with Ernest Lee, June 28th, 1976.

PLATE XIII



(a) Ernest Lee, Director of Pro-Rec, 1946 to 1949 (Mass Display Programme, 1949)



(b) R.J. "Bus" Phillips, Acting Director of Pro-Rec, 1949 to 1953 (Mass Display Programme, 1949)

impression of the Provincial Recreation Branch."¹ He was also directed to: heal the division between Pro-Rec and the schools, particularly the Vancouver School Board; pacify the leaders of the Vancouver Y.M.C.A., which resented the popularity of Pro-Rec men's gymnastics;² and restore unity within Pro-Rec staff, still affected by the separation between the men's and women's programmes.³

Lee did not stay with the Branch very long. In October, 1949, he became the second National Director of Physical Fitness, filling the federal post that had been vacant since Eisenhardt had resigned in 1946.⁴ His short time with Pro-Rec allowed him to achieve some, but not all, of his original objectives. He was successful in establishing a strong programme of inter-high school competition, and he made substantial progress in the development of community centres, with supporting grants provided by the Branch. But he did not heal the division between the men's and women's sections of Pro-Rec, and he did not change the fundamental nature of the centres, with control centralized in the Pro-Rec office.

After Lee's resignation, R.J. "Bus" Phillips, a member of the Pro-Rec administrative staff, was named Acting Director, and served in this capacity from October, 1949, until 1953. Phillips had been with Pro-Rec since the 1930's, first as a leader and then as an instructor at

¹*Public Schools Report*, 1945-46, p. 137.

²Interview with Ernest Lee, June 28th, 1976.

³*Ibid.*

⁴*Victoria Daily Times*, September 8th, 1949, p. 3. Lee did not stay in Ottawa long; after only fourteen months, he resigned as National Director of Physical Fitness.

centres in the Fraser Valley.¹ He then moved to the Pro-Rec head office, and was the Registrar there until his enlistment in the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1942. Upon his return to Pro-Rec, he became Chief Clerk and as such was responsible for management of the head office.² As Acting Director, Phillips simply absorbed the responsibilities of Director, while continuing to carry out his regular office duties.

Under Phillips' tenure, the activities of the Branch were very similar to those established by Lee, but with greater emphasis on community services and relationships with outside groups. He also stressed the sports programme, both for Pro-Rec and for the inter-high school provincial competitions. The attempts by Lee to bring Pro-Rec and the physical education profession closer together were not continued; when Lee went to Ottawa, Lorne Brown left his position as Provincial Supervisor of Physical Education to teach at Vancouver Normal School,³ and no replacement to that post was made. Phillips was handicapped by a lack of policy direction from the Department of Education, and by the burden of holding two jobs. But he accomplished one task that Lee had been unable to perform; he succeeded in reducing much of the friction and strife within the Branch caused by the Mathisen-Keatley schism.⁴

Over this eight-year period, Pro-Rec had three different

¹Interview with R.J. Phillips, May 10th, 1977.

²*Ibid.*

³Lorne Brown, "Personal Reflections - Physical Education in B.C.: Period 1927 to 1967", *Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation Journal*, XL:5 (May-June, 1974), p. 11.

⁴R.J. Phillips, comments submitted to F.T. Fairey, Deputy Minister of Education (typed), Vancouver, November, 1952 (from private collection of Pro-Rec materials held by R.J. Phillips, hereinafter referred to as "Phillips Collection").

Directors, but at the secondary level of administration, the leadership remained constant. Mathisen and Keatley were still in charge of the men's and women's sections, respectively; in addition, many of the chief instructors in various districts had been with Pro-Rec for many years: T. Ruben, E. Kelter, G. Walton, J. Dickerson, A. Batcheler, and S. Greenwood.¹ In this way, the programme retained a high degree of stability that might otherwise have been lost with so many changes in the Directorship. This stability was both a strength and a weakness, for it also perpetuated the rigidity for which Pro-Rec was criticized at the end.

THE PRO-REC PROGRAMME

The changes in objectives and scope of the Recreational and Physical Education Branch had a significant impact on the entire programme, and altered the position of Pro-Rec within this expanded agency. From being the *raison d'être* for the Branch, Pro-Rec became one of four programmes, the other three being: school health and physical education, community centres, and provincial inter-high school competitions.² In practice, however, it was very difficult to clearly delineate these four programmes, because the individuals responsible for the implementation of each programme were involved in an inter-programme manner with two, three, or even four aspects. This was particularly evident in the relationship between Pro-Rec centres and community centres; in his annual

¹Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "1951-52 Winter Session Staff List" (mimeographed), Vancouver, 1951 [PABC: 8.8.5e/No. 130].

²Public Schools Report, 1948-49, pp. 121-123

report for 1946-47, Lee illustrated this with his comment regarding community recreation programmes sponsored by the Branch:

It is to be noted that although these centres are not entirely the work of Pro-Rec, yet they could not exist without this Department, and these physical recreation classes within the community centres are still known¹ and enjoyed as Pro-Rec by the members attending . . .¹

There was also a close link between Pro-Rec and the school sports programme, as Pro-Rec instructors were often involved with clinics and competitions provided for the schools. Therefore, for purposes of this section of the study, a broader range of activities is examined, on the assumption that, in the presence of a certain degree of uncertainty, it is wiser to include than to exclude.

A significant feature of this period was the relative importance accorded different programmes sponsored by the Branch. Under Lee, Pro-Rec was relegated to a somewhat inferior rank, but under Phillips, it again returned to its former leading position. An examination of reports issued under each of these directors illustrates this changing role of Pro-Rec. In 1949, in a report written for the Physical Fitness Division of the Department of National Health and Welfare, Lee listed the services rendered by his office. He described assistance given in the co-ordination of community recreation programmes, contacts with school officials, co-operative ventures with many public agencies and private organizations, the sponsorship of salaries for directors in organized community centres, and the presentation of provincial school sports competitions. In a final section labelled "Other Services", he listed nine of these, three of which were: the organization and operation of

¹Public Schools Report, 1946-47, p. 130.

leadership training schools, the organization and operation of physical fitness classes, and the running of physical fitness demonstrations.¹ In this list Pro-Rec was barely noticeable, and was not identified by its traditional name. In contrast, Phillips produced a press release in 1952 entitled "Some of the services available through the Pro-Rec Branch", and the first of these was the programme of physical fitness centres; this description emphasized the gymnastics and sports activities carried out at each centre. Following that was information about sports programmes, films, printed material, recreation for the blind, and community recreation. In this two-page statement Pro-Rec was accorded over half of one page, and was ranked first.² These contrasting treatments demonstrated the importance attached to the Pro-Rec programme by each Director, and reflect the different philosophy brought to the Branch by Lee.

Basic Winter Programme

When the War ended, the Pro-Rec winter programme returned to its 1930's pattern, and special activities related to wartime needs were discontinued. Gymnastics remained the central activity at the centres, as indicated by the following excerpt from the "Pro-Rec Staff Handbook":

Gymnastic Activities - The Branch recognizes the importance of team and individual sports, and encourages the promotion of same, but it is agreed that group gymnastic activities provide the opportunity to train a large number of people, in a small area, in a short period of time.

¹Canada, Department of National Health and Welfare, Physical Fitness Division, "Services Rendered by the Provincial Fitness Offices" (mimeographed information bulletin), Ottawa, 1949, pp. 2-4.

²Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Some of the Services available through the Pro-Rec Branch" (mimeographed), Vancouver, January 18th, 1952 [PABC: 8.8.5e No. 130].

Therefore, the operation of fitness centres has been the core of the physical recreation program carried on by the Branch.

Gymnastic classes can only be successful if they provide a program aimed at the well-rounded physical development of the individual. Such a responsibility requires that the instructor be not only an outstanding example of such training, but also that he have the ability to impart that knowledge to others.¹

Women's Keep Fit classes, especially those held in Vancouver and Victoria, continued to be the most popular activities presented.² Also, a businessmen's centre, with a programme similar to Keep Fit for women, was still offered at a Vancouver high school.³

An innovative concept, introduced by Lee, was that of mixed centres, the first of which was opened at the Vancouver Normal School in February, 1949. The men who regularly attended that centre were asked to bring their wives or girl friends; activities included physical training and stunts, and square dancing.⁴ A centre of this kind was still being offered in 1950-51, but by then, most of the mixed centres were based on specific sport activities.⁵

The sports component of the winter programme was expanded slightly. Swimming, weight lifting, wrestling, judo, badminton, fencing, roller skating, bowling, basketball, and dry skiing centres operated

¹"Pro-Rec Staff Handbook - 1952-53 Season", *op. cit.*, p. 4

²Canada, Department of National Health and Welfare, Physical Fitness Division, "Annual Report - 1949-50" (mimeographed), Appendix, p. 1.

³Recreational and Physical Education Branch, publicity flyer (mimeographed), 1951 [PABC: 8.8.5e No. 130].

⁴*Vancouver Sun*, February 26th, 1949, p. 2.

⁵Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "1950-51 Winter Schedule of Pro-Rec Classes in Greater Vancouver", flyer (mimeographed), Vancouver, 1950 (Ruben Collection).

during the 1950-51 season. Some of these were mixed, some were for women only, and some were for men.¹ In Victoria, ice skating and advanced diving were also offered.²

Summer Programme

In addition to the regular Pro-Rec centres operating during the summer throughout the province, co-operative projects with the Vancouver Park Board were re-established by Lee. In the summer of 1946, tennis and archery were jointly sponsored by the two agencies,³ and the following summer, outdoor square dancing was started.⁴ In 1952, the women's summer calendar listed swimming, bowling, and a Pro-Rec softball league.⁵

There is some reason to believe that the summer programme regressed markedly during this time. Certain figures on British Columbia registrations given in annual reports of the Physical Fitness Division for 1948-49 and 1949-50 do not correspond with those in the Department of Education annual reports. There is a strong possibility that these Physical Fitness division reports presented winter enrollments only, and on this assumption, the following incomplete table can be developed:

¹*Ibid.*

²Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Victoria Pro-Rec Schedule - 1951-52" (mimeographed), Victoria, 1951 [PABC: 8.8.5e No. 130].

³*Public Schools Report*, 1945-46, p. 137.

⁴*Public Schools Report*, 1946-47, p. 130.

⁵Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Women's 1952 Pro-Rec Revue", printed programme, Vancouver, 1952, p. 4 (Keatley Collection).

TABLE 19

SEASONAL ENROLLMENTS (INCOMPLETE): 1945-46 TO 1949-50

Year	Summer	Winter	Total
1945-46 ¹	8,612	16,401	25,013
1946-47 ²	7,927	9,404	17,331
1947-48	n.a.	n.a.	14,042
1948-49 ³	(3,895)	(13,388)	17,283
1949-50 ⁴	(986)	(12,721)	13,707

Sports Programme

With the end of the War, the Recreational and Physical Education Branch began an expansion of its sports programme, both in Pro-Rec centres and in schools. A sports officer was appointed in 1945, whose responsibilities included organizing football, lacrosse, and cricket teams, and he travelled to all parts of the province.⁵ In later years, this programme was expanded to include: coaching schools for lacrosse, soccer, basketball, and track and field;⁶ referees for lacrosse leagues;⁷

¹Public Schools Report, 1945-46, p. 139.

²Public Schools Report, 1946-47, p. 129.

³Canada, Department of National Health and Welfare, Physical Fitness Division, "Annual Report: 1949-50" (mimeographed), p. 5.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Public Schools Report, 1945-46, p. 137.

⁶Public Schools Reports, 1946-47, p. 130 and 1947-48, p. 119.

⁷Ibid.

large scale promotions of basketball, softball, cricket, and lacrosse;¹ and officiating courses in soccer, lacrosse, track and field, softball, and basketball.² Basketball officiating classes were particularly influential, as they were presented in Greater Vancouver, the Fraser Valley, the Okanagan, and on Vancouver Island by experienced referees and instructors, and the dissemination of similar standards through the province was thereby effected. Approximately one hundred referees attended these classes in 1949-50,³ and this clinic was conducted in each of the subsequent years that the Branch was in operation.

Requests for clinics and courses in major sports from schools and community groups grew during this period, and the Branch responded by organizing them. In August, 1949, a sports coaching school for teachers was held, and outstanding people in basketball, field hockey, soccer, and track and field presented the latest in coaching techniques and rules interpretations.⁴ Then, in September, 1950, a similar clinic for soccer and basketball was conducted; in addition to the topics covered the previous year, this clinic included a session on the psychology of leadership.⁵

The programme of sports organized for Pro-Rec members was not as extensive as it had been before the War. Nevertheless, there were many opportunities for sports participation including:

¹Public Schools Reports, 1947-48, p. 119 and 1948-49, p. 123.

²Public Schools Report, 1948-49, p. 123.

³Public Schools Report, 1949-50, p. 124.

⁴Public Schools Report, 1948-49, p. 121.

⁵Public Schools Report, 1950-51, p. 122.

- a field hockey team entered in the Vancouver league after being discontinued during the War;¹
- Pro-Rec basketball leagues operating at Vancouver high schools;²
- a Pro-Rec Saturday bowling league for women;³
- the annual Pro-Rec invitational badminton tournament;⁴
- a volleyball tournament for all centres, first held in 1952;⁵
- the annual table tennis tournament;⁶
- the Pro-Rec novice weightlifting tournament.⁷

Goodminton, a Pro-Rec invention, continued to thrive in the Fraser Valley; because the game was played nowhere else, the winners of the tournaments were declared world champions!⁸

The provincial gymnastics championships were held each year, but only for men. Up to 1949, these championships were held in conjunction with the annual Mass Display, but when that was discontinued in 1950 in favour of separate men's and women's presentations, the championship

¹Letter to Pro-Rec members from H. Keatley (mimeographed), Vancouver, September 8th, 1948 (Keatley Collection).

²Recreational and Physical Education Branch, Information flyer (mimeographed), Vancouver, 1951-52 [PABC: 8.8.5e, No. 130].

³Recreational and Physical Education Branch, Information flyer (mimeographed), Vancouver, 1951-52 [PABC: 8.8.5e, No. 130].

⁴Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Pro-Rec News Spotlight", III:4 (March, 1952), pp. 4-5 [PABC: 8.8.5e, No. 130].

⁵Recreational and Physical Education Branch, Information flyer (mimeographed), Vancouver, February, 1953 [PABC: 8.8.5e, No. 133].

⁶"Pro-Rec News Spotlight", III:4 (March, 1952), p. 1 [PABC: 8.8.5e, No. 130].

⁷"Pro-Rec News Spotlight", III:5 (April, 1952), p. 3 (Ruben Collection).

⁸*Daily Province*, October 4th, 1947, magazine section, p. 2.

was held at the time of the men's display. That was the last year of the men's display, however, and in the following years, the gymnastics championships were held in New Westminster.¹

Social Activities

In the women's centres, social activities retained their importance. Typical of these was the 1952 Valentine Social held at General Wolfe School. After the usual workout, a film was shown, and contests were held. This was followed by refreshments supplied by the members, and the entire evening was organized by the centre's social committee.² Victoria centres held a square dance social at the Crystal Gardens in 1952; on another occasion, a Valentine Tea was enjoyed by thirty members at that same location.³ Christmas was also an opportunity to stage social events; in 1946, thirty-one Christmas parties were held at Pro-Rec centres in Vancouver, Ladner, Abbotsford, Port Moody, Burnaby, New Westminster, Richmond, and Coquitlam.⁴

The biggest single social event of the year was the Pro-Rec Picnic, held at Bowen Island, near Vancouver. Between five and six hundred persons attended these annual affairs, participating in contests and applauding the new Pro-Rec Queen and Princesses, chosen from contestants named by Pro-Rec centres. The programme of sports included the

¹Public Schools Reports, 1949-50, p. 123; 1950-51, p. 122; 1951-52, p. 127.

²Recreational and Physical Education Branch, Information flyer (mimeographed), Vancouver, 1952 [PABC: 8.8.5e, No. 130].

³"Pro-Rec News Spotlight", III:4, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁴Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Pro-Rec Christmas Bulletin" (mimeographed), Vancouver, 1946 (Keatley Collection).

typical picnic events, such as dashes, softball throw, sack race, three-legged race, tug-o-war, egg-throwing, piggy-back race, and walking race.¹ Perhaps the most unique event was staged in 1947, when a twenty-eight-month-old child defeated a dozen other tots in somersaults in the baby-rolling contest.²

Special Programmes

As part of the Branch expansion to include school physical education, an extensive provincial inter-high school programme of championship tournaments was staged. These were the first to be held in British Columbia, and were intended to serve a number of useful purposes: providing impetus for school sports in general; encouraging the development of social relationships among participants; and giving students the chance to travel to other parts of the province.³

The first provincial tournament was the track and field meet held at the University of British Columbia in May, 1947. Zone meets preceded this, with local winners advancing to the provincial finals. An athletes' village was established at the University residence, and 120 participants were housed there. This first venture was very successful, and gave encouragement for an expansion of the programme.⁴

An extensive schedule of seven sports was then organized for

¹Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "Sixth Annual Pro-Rec Picnic Programme" (printed), Vancouver, July, 1950 (Keatley Collection).

²*Daily Province*, July 7th, 1947, p. 13.

³Canada, Department of National Health and Welfare, Physical Fitness Division, "First Five Years Under the National Physical Fitness Act: 1943-48" (mimeographed first draft), Ottawa, 1948, p. 18.

⁴*Public Schools Report*, 1946-47, p. 128.

1947-48. British Columbia was divided into sixteen zones for the declaration of zone winners, and championship sites were located in different parts of the province so that students could expand their travel experiences. The sports, and their locations, were:

Curling	- Nelson
Ice Hockey	- Vernon
Girls' Basketball	- Kelowna
Boys' Basketball	- New Westminster
Volleyball	- Vancouver
Badminton	- Haney
Track and Field	- Nanaimo ¹

The 1948-49 season was similar, with Girls' and Boys' Volleyball held separately,² but by 1949-50, this programme was beginning to decline, with indications that province-wide competition should be discontinued for economic reasons. The exception to this was boys' basketball, which continued under the sponsorship of the new B.C. Inter High School Boys' Basketball Association. The Branch did continue to encourage zone competitions, with invitations extended beyond the zone.³ In the last season, 1952-53, the Branch assisted in the organization and promotion of five invitational tournaments or meets: girls' and boys' volleyball, girls' and boys' basketball, and boys' curling.⁴

Another Branch expansion was in the area of recreational

¹Public Schools Report, 1947-48, p. 117.

²Public Schools Report, 1948-49, p. 121.

³Public Schools Report, 1949-50, p. 122.

⁴Public Schools Report, 1952-53, p. 123.

programmes for special institutions. One of these was the Provincial Mental Hospital in New Westminster. Recreation classes were held there daily for a number of groups, under the direction of Jack Lynes, a Pro-Rec instructor who later became a permanent employee at that institution. In 1947-48, Lynes' programme included activities for boys and girls, and for men and women. Light exercises, singing games, and elementary group games were presented for the young children. The men's and boys' classes included tumbling, work on the parallel bars, group games, Danish exercises, and dancing. Folk and square dances, as well as mat acrobatics and exercises, were provided for the women. In the summer, outdoor sessions covered a wide range of games and activities; softball was particularly popular. As with the Pro-Rec programme, an annual display was held in May, and was an outstanding success.¹

The programme for blind persons, started in 1935, was expanded in 1949 to cover a wide range of activities. A full-time recreation director for the programme, Joseph Lewis, was employed by the Branch to arrange a suitable programme with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind. Activities included: fishing club, salmon derby, summer camp, picnic, bowling, music appreciation, magic class, choral group, swimming, judo, literary discussion groups, discus club, and "gadabouts" club.² In subsequent years, other activities were added, such as cribbage tournaments, public speaking classes, dancing, and dramatic activities.³ The

¹Canada, Department of National Health and Welfare, Physical Fitness Division, "Recreation in Mental Institutions" (mimeographed), Ottawa, 1947-48, pp. 11-13 [PAC: RG 29/797, No. 460].

²Public Schools Report, 1949-50, p. 123.

³Public Schools Report, 1952-53, p. 124.

programme was offered for blind persons in Vancouver, Victoria, New Westminster, Chilliwack, and Kelowna, through local White Cane Clubs.¹

School physical education programmes, while not directly related to Pro-Rec, were a responsibility of the Branch while Lee was Director. In his capacity as Provincial Supervisor of Physical Education, he visited school districts throughout the province, and discussed the organization of physical education programmes with school inspectors.² In 1946-47, Lorne Brown was appointed Provincial Supervisor, and continued to provide assistance to schools. In that same year, a selected group of ex-servicemen were given an intensive course in physical education and teacher training at Vancouver Normal School, to help reduce the shortage of trained physical education teachers throughout the province. In addition, the Branch head office provided information to school districts regarding building construction, gymnasium planning, organization and administration, and programme planning.³ In May, 1949, a touring modern dance clinic was organized by the Branch, and seven teachers visited high schools in many parts of the province, presenting teachers' sessions and demonstrations for teachers and students.⁴ After Lee left Pro-Rec, the services provided to schools were more related to sports coaching and officiating, although the Branch did continue to provide advice on facilities, equipment, and programmes, and to distribute a periodical bulletin to schools "designed to stimulate the Physical programme."⁵

¹Public Schools Report, 1950-51, p. 125.

²Public Schools Report, 1945-46, p. 137.

³Public Schools Report, 1946-47, p. 128

⁴Physical Fitness Division, "Annual Report: 1949-50", *op. cit.*, p.2.

⁵Public Schools Report, 1950-51, p. 122

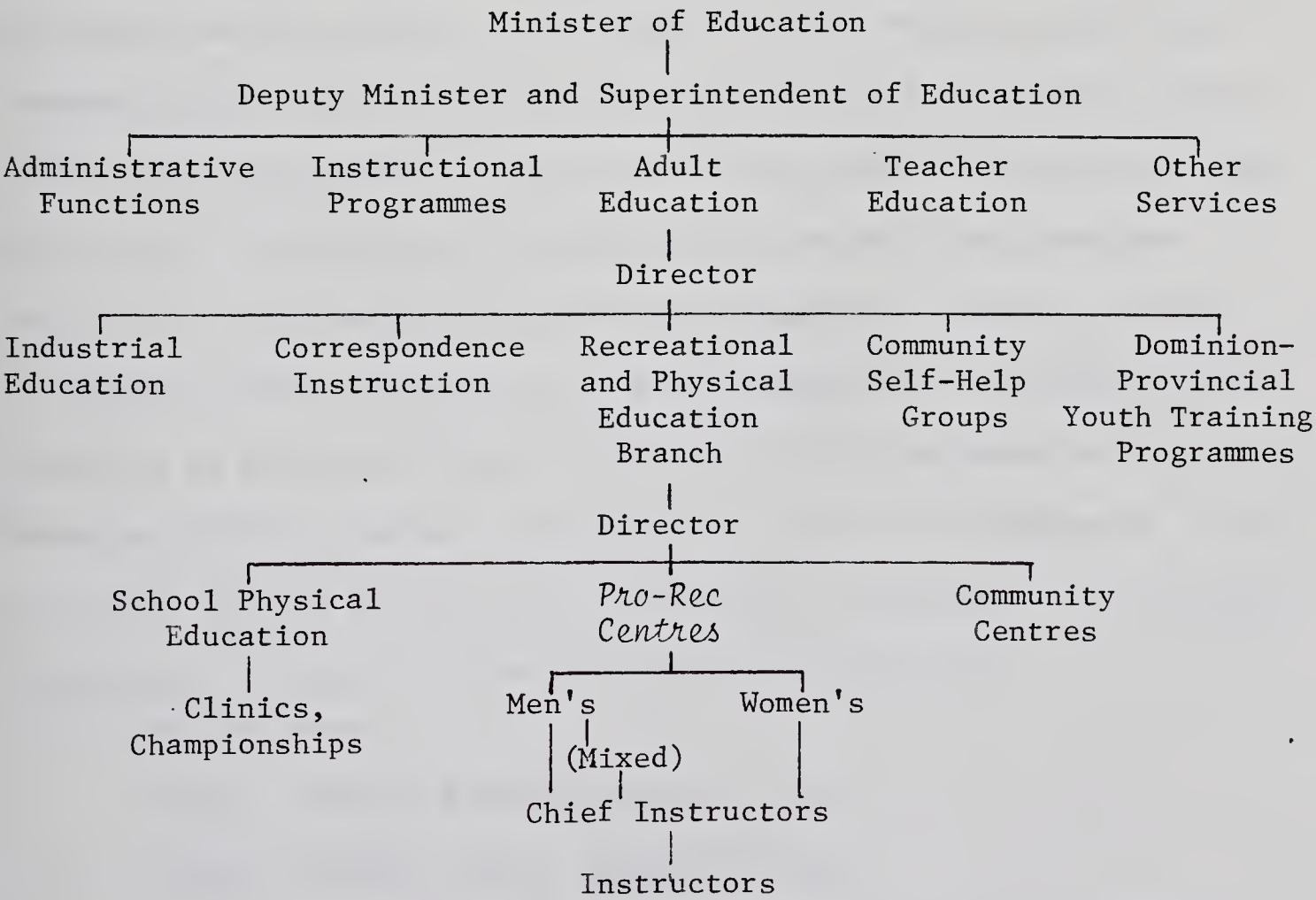
ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

General Administration

From its inception, Pro-Rec was an administrative unit of the Adult Education division of the Department of Education, as were Industrial Education, Correspondence Instruction, Community Self-Help Groups, and Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Programmes.¹ Figure 3 illustrates the position of Pro-Rec within the Department of Education, and the lines of responsibility of various employees within Pro-Rec, during the post-war period.²

FIGURE 3

PRO-REC AS A BRANCH OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



¹Public Schools Report, 1942-43, p. 97.

²Public Schools Reports, 1945-46 to 1949-50.

The feature that Pro-Rec held in common with the other branches of the Adult Education division was the provision of an educational service for the non-school population. Therefore, Lee's appointment in 1946 as Director of Pro-Rec and as Provincial Supervisor of Physical Education in the public schools produced an anomolous situation. The school supervisory position was created when Lee became Pro-Rec Director,¹ and he served in this dual capacity for most of the 1946-47 school year. Then, in April, 1947, Lorne Brown joined the Branch as Provincial Supervisor of Physical Education,² and held this position for two years. After Lee left for Ottawa, no new Provincial Supervisor of Physical Education was named. Therefore, only from 1946 to 1949 did British Columbia have a provincial official charged with the supervision of physical education programmes in the elementary and secondary schools. Lee and Brown had been the only regular Pro-Rec employees to hold full teaching credentials with recognized specializations in physical education, and the appointment of any other Pro-Rec employee to the position of Provincial Supervisor of Physical Education would not have been acceptable to the teachers and school administrators of the province. The administrative decision to place the supervision of school physical education in the Recreational and Physical Education Branch of the Adult Education division was not an advantage to the school programmes, in the long term, because after Lee left the Branch, the position of Provincial Supervisor of Physical Education was not again filled.³

¹Public Schools Report, 1945-46, p. 137.

²Public Schools Report, 1946-47, p. 128.

³At the time of this writing, there had not been a Provincial Supervisor of Physical Education since Lorne Brown's time.

Coinciding with the assumption, by Lee in 1946, of the two positions described above, the name of the Pro-Rec Branch was changed in certain significant usages. Originally called the "Recreational and Physical Education Branch", it became, in documents such as annual reports, the "Physical Education and Recreation Branch." This title appeared in Lee's first report, written in July, 1946.¹ The name change was also to be found in brochures, display programmes, and the "Pro-Rec News Spotlight" bulletin. There was no consistent use of the new name, however; while the 1953 order-in-council that created the Community Programmes Branch referred to the "Physical Education and Recreation Branch",² the 1952 report of the Deputy Minister of Education recommending major changes used the original Branch title.³ Also, the Public Accounts for the Province of British Columbia retained the original designation, slightly modified, for all reports up to and including 1952-53. The slight modification occurred in 1951-52; before that year, the accounts for the Branch were listed under the heading: "Recreational and Physical Education for Youths over School Age", but in 1951-52, the heading was reduced to "Recreational and Physical Education";⁴ this change reflected, somewhat tardily, the extensive junior programme which had been started in 1944.

¹Public Schools Report, 1945-46, p. 137.

²British Columbia, Executive Council, Order-in-Council No. 1890, Victoria, August 11th, 1953. See Appendix L for the full text of this order-in-council.

³Fairey Report, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

⁴British Columbia, Legislative Assembly, Sessional Papers, Public Accounts - 1950-51, p. 76.

Another administrative change during this period was the re-location of the Pro-Rec head office. After the 1945 fire which destroyed the Vancouver Athletic Club, Pro-Rec transferred its headquarters to 445 Richards Street, while Lee retained his office in the Vancouver Block on Granville Street.¹ Then, in 1947, a final move was made, in which all administrative functions of the Branch were centered in the new office at 2414 Main Street.²

Staff and Instructors

With the return of servicemen, and a general post-war programme expansion, the number of full- and part-time staff and instructors grew steadily. Directors of community services receiving monthly grants from the Branch were also included on staff lists. Table 20 compares three years during this period, and shows that the largest increase was in the numbers of part-time instructors, although this did decrease after 1948-49. From this table, it can readily be seen that Pro-Rec depended primarily on part-time employees for the operation of its programme. Most classes were conducted in the evenings, and while some of the instructors and pianists held other jobs during the day, many merely worked one or two evenings per week, for a small income.³ The stipend paid for an evening's work was one dollar per hour's session plus one dollar for the evening itself, to a maximum of five dollars.⁴

¹Canada, Department of National Health and Welfare, Physical Fitness Division, "Annual Report - 1946-47" (mimeographed), Ottawa, 1947, p.4.

²Interview with Ernest Lee, June 28th, 1976.

³Interview with Hilda Keatley, February 21st, 1976.

⁴"Pro-Rec Staff Handbook - 1952-53 Season", *op. cit.*, p. 4.

TABLE 20

COMPARISON OF NUMBERS OF PRO-REC STAFF: 1946-47 TO 1951-52

Classification	1946-47 ¹	1948-49 ²	1951-52 ³
Provincial Supervisors	2	2	2
Regional Supervisors and Chief Instructors	4	4	6
Full-Time Instructors	6	7	2
Special Directors ⁴	1	1	2
Part-Time Instructors	85	122	104
Community Centre Directors	11	8	12
Pianists ⁵	n/a	45	32
Office Staff ⁶	3	5	5
Total	112 (inc.)	194	165

Full-time staff worked long days, and for chief instructors and regional supervisors, their day did not end until the evening's classes

¹Canada, Department of National Health and Welfare, *Annual Report: 1946-47* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1947), p. 85.

²Canada, Department of National Health and Welfare, Physical Fitness Division, "Annual Report - 1948-49" (mimeographed), Appendix, p. 3.

³Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "1951-52 Winter Session Staff List", *op. cit.*

⁴These were the Sport Director and the Director of Recreation for the Blind.

⁵These pianists were primarily employed at women's centres.

⁶The office staff included the Office Manager (Chief Clerk), the Public Relations Officer, the Equipment Officer, and clerical assistants.

were finished.¹ Administrative duties were heavy; the chief instructress in Vancouver, for example, was responsible for publicity, registration, head office routine, the organization of Summer School for women, and instructing at her own centres.² A typical complement of full-time employees was that for 1951-52, and consisted of:

Director

2 Provincial Supervisors - one for men, one for women

2 Chief Instructors in Vancouver - one for men, one for women

4 Regional Supervisors - Fraser Valley, Okanagan, Vancouver

Island, Northern B.C.

4 Instructors - Vancouver, Victoria, Sports Director, Director
of Recreation for the Blind

1 Equipment Officer - at Vancouver warehouse

2 Clerks - head office, Vancouver³

Reference has been made earlier to the stability of the programme produced by staff members who remained with Pro-Rec for a substantial period of time. Those individuals who joined the staff in the first few years of Pro-Rec's operation and who were still there in 1953 were: Jerry Mathisen, the only person to be with Pro-Rec for its full nineteen years; Hilda Keatley, who started in 1936; Thomas Ruben, the Fraser Valley supervisor, who started in 1935; Alf Batcheler, who came to the Vancouver centres in 1935, worked with the youth hostelling association,

¹Interviews with R.J. Phillips, May 19th, 1977 and Grace Walton, May 30th, 1977.

²Interview with Grace Walton, May 30th, 1977.

³Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "1951-52 Winter Session Staff List", *op. cit.*

and then returned after the War to become public relations officer; and R.J. "Bus" Phillips, who became an instructor in 1938, joined the head office staff, served in the air force, and then returned after the War. Others, whose names appeared on staff lists both in the 1930's and the 1950's, were Ed Kelter and Paul Nemeth.

Training of Instructors

After the War, the general organization of Pro-Rec Summer Schools was modified, although the content changed very little. The 1945 Summer School was again centralized in Vancouver, for the first time since 1941, but it was separated into men's and women's schools, held at different times and in different places. With one exception, this separation prevailed throughout the remaining years of Pro-Rec. That one exception was an experiment conducted by Lee in 1947, when he combined the Pro-Rec Summer School with that normally conducted for physical education teachers by the Department of Education. Classes were held at Kitsilano High School in Vancouver. The experiment does not appear to have been successful, for it was not repeated.

In Figure 4, the duration and month of each Summer School is listed, for men and for women. The first Summer School after the War was a long one, for the benefit of those who had been away or were new to the staff. In the following years, the women's school was routinely an eleven-day refresher course,¹ while the men's school varied in length from fourteen to twenty-two days. In 1946, no Summer School was held; instead, a one-week course for women, and an evening course for men were presented in September. Lack of finances was given as the reason for

¹Interview with Hilda Keatley, May 27th, 1977.

this exceptional situation.¹

FIGURE 4
PRO-REC SUMMER SCHOOLS: 1945 TO 1952²

Year	Men		Women	
	No. of Days	Month	No. of Days	Month
1945 ³	24	August	20	September
1946 ⁴	(evenings)	(September)	(7)	(September)
1947 ⁵	31	July-August	31	July-August
1948	(separate Summer Schools were held; details are not available)			
1949 ⁶	16	August	11	August
1950 ⁷	14	August	11	September
1951 ⁸	22	August	11	September
1952 ⁹	22	August	11	September

¹Letter to Ian Eisenhardt, National Physical Fitness Director, Ottawa, from Jerry Mathisen, Pro-Rec Provincial Supervisor for Men, Vancouver, August 2nd, 1946 [PAC: RG 29/826/214-1-9/Part 1].

²The number of days for each summer school is estimated from the dates given.

³Public Schools Report, 1945-46, p. 140.

⁴Letter to Ian Eisenhardt from Jerry Mathisen, August 2nd, 1946, *op. cit.* Information about this Summer School is not specific.

⁵Public Schools Report, 1947-48, p. 117.

⁶Department of Education, Recreational and Physical Education, Summer School courses, brochure, Vancouver, 1949 (Keatley Collection).

⁷Department of Education, Recreational and Physical Education, "1950 Summer School of Physical Education and Recreation", printed brochure, Vancouver, 1950 (Keatley Collection).

⁸Public Schools Report, 1951-52, p. 128.

⁹Public Schools Report, 1952-53, p. 125

The contents and objectives of Summer School courses did not differ markedly from those of the 1930's. The purposes were:

To offer an intensive short course in recreational leadership for men and women in the following categories:

1. Instructors in physical recreation who desire to attend a refresher.
2. Those wishing to train as Pro-Rec leaders or instructors.
3. Persons who would like to avail themselves of advanced work but who do not necessarily intend to become instructors.¹

The men's course consisted of: Physical Education Activities, such as exercises, gymnastics, tumbling, apparatus work, and aquatics; Sports Education, that is, the organizing, coaching, and refereeing of softball, badminton, volleyball, basketball, tennis, judo, and track and field; Anatomy and Physiology; and Events and Social Recreation, including demonstrations, organization of gymnastics competitions, and tabloid sports.² The women prepared for the various programmes offered: Adult Women's Pro-Rec, that is, the basic programme of rhythmic gymnastics, tumbling, vaulting, dancing and aquatics; Junior Girls' Pro-Rec, stressing apparatus, dancing, and games; Keep Fit, a less strenuous programme of exercises for older women; and Community Centres, providing recreational opportunities for mixed groups, chiefly dancing, games and mixers, and social evenings.³

The numbers attending these Summer Schools fluctuated somewhat over this period. In 1945, forty-five women and thirty-five men attended the School;⁴ in 1949, the numbers were fifty-one and twenty-four,

¹"1950 Summer School", *op. cit.*

²*Ibid.*

³*Ibid.*

⁴*Public Schools Report, 1945-46, p. 141.*

respectively,¹ and in 1952, enrollment for women had dropped to thirty-six, while that for men had risen to thirty-four.²

Another form of instruction was that presented in the Fraser Valley, where Thomas Ruben organized short courses for leaders of community recreation. His courses were conducted for approximately three months, with one session per week. Subjects included: planning for community recreation, the National Physical Fitness programme, sports organization, Junior Farm clubs, techniques of selected games, and recreational dancing. A diploma was presented to successful students, and one of the course requirements was a survey of recreational facilities in the student's home community. The 1947 course was held in Langley, and that for 1948 in Cloverdale.³

Facilities and Equipment

Pro-Rec centres were located in schools, community halls, churches, neighbourhood houses, union halls, and, in Victoria, at the Crystal Gardens Pool.⁴ This followed the pattern set in the 1930's, but by the 1950's, more schools and fewer church halls were being used.

The only noteworthy development with respect to equipment was its disposition after Pro-Rec was terminated. Most of the equipment was written off by the Department of Education, and was left at the location

¹Public Schools Report, 1949-50, p. 123.

²Public Schools Report, 1952-53, p. 125.

³Recreational and Physical Education, "Course for Leaders of Community Recreation", mimeographed flyer, 1948 (Ruben Collection).

⁴Recreational and Physical Education, "Join the Pro-Rec Physical Fitness Classes", printed programme, Vancouver, 1950 (Ruben Collection); "Victoria Pro-Rec Schedule — 1951-52", mimeographed programme, Victoria, 1951 [PABC: 8.8.5e, No. 130].

where it had been used. If that facility could continue to make use of it, it remained there; if not, other groups or institutions could request it. This was done in an informal manner, by verbal arrangements. In this way, many institutions were able to obtain useful gymnastics equipment such as mats, bars, and boxes.¹

Finances

The sources of funds for the period from 1945-46 to 1952-53 were provincial appropriations through the Department of Education and federal contributions through the Department of National Health and Welfare's Physical Fitness Division. Table 21 lists those grants. A steady increase in government grants is noted, with the exception of 1950-51. The federal grant remained at approximately \$16,000 until the last year of Pro-Rec's operation. The federal grant thus came to represent a smaller portion of the total funds spent by Pro-Rec, dropping from thirty-six per cent in the last year of the War to twelve and thirteen per cent for the final four years of the programme. In every year, provincial appropriations were increased, except for 1950-51. The slightly lower amount that year, compared to 1949-50, is more noticeable in the provincial estimates for those two years; the estimate for 1949-50 was \$119,800, while for 1950-51, it was \$115,090.² This corresponds to the decline in the number of centres and registrants for the previous two years.³ When the membership increased again in 1950-51, the

¹Interview with H. Douglas Whittle, former President, B.C. Amateur Athletic Union of Canada Gymnastics Section, December 6, 1978.

²See Appendix E.

³*Supra*, pp. 266-267.

appropriation also increased.¹

TABLE 21

GOVERNMENT GRANTS TO PRO-REC: 1944-45 TO 1952-53²

Year	Provincial	Federal (% of Total)	Total
1944-45	\$ 28,402.74	\$16,015.75 (36.06)	\$ 44,418.49
1945-46	40,576.71	16,015.75 (28.30)	56,592.46
1946-47	52,140.29	16,015.75 (23.50)	68,156.04
1947-48	72,703.78	16,015.75 (18.05)	88,719.53
1948-49	81,209.51	15,993.00 (16.45)	97,202.51
1949-50	103,501.93	15,993.00 (13.38)	119,494.93
1950-51	103,195.88	15,993.00 (13.43)	119,118.88
1951-52	113,582.04	15,993.00 (12.34)	129,575.04
1952-53	123,874.67	19,296.25 (13.48)	143,170.92
(1953-54) ³	(64,634.49)	(19,296.25) (22.99)	(83,930.74)

Table 22 presents the percentage of total funds spent on categories of expenses. Salaries continued to account for between sixty-five and seventy-three per cent of the total funds spent, while rental

¹This financial situation supports statements made by a number of Pro-Rec staff members interviewed by the writer, who indicated that provincial grants were dependent upon numbers of members and centres. Interviews with Hilda Keatley, May 23rd, 1977; Ernest Lee, June 28th, 1976; R.J. Phillips, May 19th, 1977.

²See Appendix E.

³These grants were made, not to Pro-Rec, but to the Community Programmes Branch.

TABLE 22

PARTIAL ANALYSIS OF EXPENDITURES: 1944-45 TO 1952-53¹

Year	Salaries	Rental	Other	Total
1944-45	\$32,117.50 (72.3)	\$6,879.50 (15.5)	\$5,421.49 (12.2)	\$44,418.49
1945-46	41,308.12 (73.0)	6,135.50 (10.8)	9,148.84 (16.2)	56,592.46
1946-47	49,328.66 (72.4)	5,016.20 (7.4)	13,811.18 (20.2)	68,156.04
1947-48	57,904.12 (65.3)	7,281.28 (8.2)	23,534.13 (26.5)	88,719.53
1948-49	69,178.97 (71.2)	9,464.61 (9.7)	18,558.93 (19.1)	97,202.51
1949-50	77,024.15 (64.5)	13,192.64 (11.0)	29,278.14 (24.5)	119,494.93
1950-51	81,312.80 (68.3)	12,688.13 (10.6)	25,117.95 (21.1)	119,118.88
1951-52	87,671.41 (67.7)	14,864.63 (11.4)	27,039.00 (20.9)	129,575.04
1952-53	100,765.80 (70.4)	14,334.62 (10.0)	28,070.50 (19.6)	143,170.92

dropped and then rose, corresponding to the reduction and then the increase in numbers of centres during the period. In 1950-51, the items of "School health and physical education" and "Physical education supplies" appeared in the final statements of expenditures.² This category

¹Public Accounts - 1944-45 to 1952-53.

²British Columbia, Legislative Assembly, *Sessional Papers*, 1950-51, "Public Accounts - 1950-51" (Victoria, King's Printer, 1951), p. E77. This was also the same year that the Public Accounts statements changed this account title from "Recreational and Physical Education for Youths over School Age" to "Recreational and Physical Education"; these two developments indicate a change in policy with respect to schools, juniors, and Pro-Rec, possibly an official recognition by school boards of the legitimacy of Pro-Rec's junior programme. Junior enrollments for this period were not included in Annual Reports and only a few schedules are available for study, but the 1950-51 schedule for Vancouver does show a large increase in Junior centres over those for 1946-47; *supra*, p. 269.

was probably not a new kind of expenditure but simply a re-arrangement of the group labelled "Other" in Table 22, because an examination of the actual accounts paid reveals that the same firms listed in the new categories had been providing equipment and services for many years.¹

Table 23 presents the detailed estimates for the Recreational and Physical Education Branch budget vote for 1950-51, and provides some insight into the actual financial operation of Pro-Rec during this period.

TABLE 23
RECREATIONAL AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION ESTIMATES: 1950-51²

Expense Item	Estimate
Salaries: Director	\$3,780.00
Two Recreational Supervisors	6,120.00
Two Regional Supervisors	5,160.00
Three Chief Instructors	6,750.00
Four Instructors	7,500.00
Public Relations Assistant	2,580.00
Equipment Officer	2,100.00
Senior Clerk	2,580.00
Clerk-Stenographer	1,620.00
Stenographer	1,500.00

¹*Public Accounts - 1945-46*, pp. 89-91; *1950-51*, pp. 76-77.

²*Sessional Papers, Estimates - 1950-51*, p. Z56. This was the first year that a breakdown of estimated costs for Pro-Rec was listed in the Sessional Papers.

Temporary Assistance (part-time instructors)	35,000.00	\$74,690.00
Expenses: Office expense	3,000.00	
Travelling expense	5,000.00	
Upkeep of automobiles	2,000.00	
Automobile and accessories	1,000.00	
Publicity and mass displays	5,000.00	
Rentals of halls and gymnasias	9,000.00	
Rentals	3,000.00	
Office furniture & equipment	500.00	
School health and physical education	500.00	
Physical education supplies	7,000.00	
Leadership training courses	2,400.00	
Incidentals and contingencies	2,000.00	
		\$115,090.00
Less revenue	6,000.00	109,090.00
Less Dominion grant	16,000.00	<u>\$ 93,090.00</u>

The item labelled "revenue", listed above as \$6,000, was probably based upon estimates of income from registration fees and mass displays. The actual revenue for 1950-51 was \$2,411.92.¹ The estimates first included revenue as an item in 1948-49, and this ranged from \$4,000.00 to \$6,000.00; actual revenues for the last five years of Pro-Rec did not exceed \$4,700.00 per annum.²

¹Public Accounts - 1951-52, p. EE52.

²Public Accounts - 1948-49, pp. EE 83-84; 1952-53, pp. EE 53-54.

The only other source of financial aid for Pro-Rec was, as in the 1930's, the contribution made by the agency sponsoring a Pro-Rec centre. The agency was expected to provide the hall, plus utilities, janitorial services, and washing facilities; assist in purchasing equipment for the centre; and aid local instructors who attended the Pro-Rec Summer School.¹

PROMOTION AND PUBLICITY

General Publicity

There were very few developments or innovations in this aspect of Pro-Rec during the post-war years. The only publication was the bulletin of information for centres and instructors, now re-named "News Spotlight"; its first issue was produced in the fall of 1949.

The Pro-Rec radio programme continued to broadcast on Saturday mornings over Station CJOR,² and a float was regularly entered in the Pacific National Exhibition parade.³ Local community advertising for centres was attained through the use of large, printed posters, seventeen inches by eleven inches, containing photographs of Pro-Rec activities and leaving space for the location and time of specific local centres.⁴

Alf Batcheler was Public Relations Officer after the War, and was responsible for articles in newspaper magazine supplements, and for publicity releases.

¹"Pro-Rec Staff Handbook - 1952-53 Season", *op. cit.*, p. 5.

²Public Schools Report, 1949-50, p. 124.

³Photographs of 1949 and 1950 P.N.E. parades (Keatley Collection).

⁴Posters (Keatley Collection).

PLATE XIV



Pro-Rec Float, Pacific National Exhibition Parade, Vancouver,
1950 (Keatley Collection)

Displays

The annual Mass Display, an important feature of the Pro-Rec programme, and an extremely popular special event in Vancouver, was held each year until 1949, after which separate men's and women's displays were presented. The displays of the 1940's were similar to those held in previous periods, the only notable difference being a drop in participants and spectators for the 1947 display.¹

In February, 1950, Mathisen informed his staff that, because of the uncertain availability of the Vancouver Forum, the only building large enough for the full Mass Display, separate displays for men and women would be held.² In mid-April, the men staged a two-day event; on the first day, the regular closing demonstration was presented, and on the second day, the annual gymnastics championship was featured, both held at Exhibition Gardens.³ The women's division gave a two-day revue, late in May.⁴ In 1951 and 1952, women's revues were again held, but the 1953 event was cancelled because of a curtailed budget.⁵ The men did not present a display after 1950.⁶

However, it was only in Vancouver that the Mass Display was discontinued. In Victoria, this annual event was staged every year up

¹*Vancouver Sun*, April 2nd, 1947, p. 13.

²Letter to Pro-Rec men's staff from Jerry Mathisen, February 22nd, 1950, *op. cit.*

³*Ibid.*

⁴"Women's Pro-Rec Revue", May, 1950, *op. cit.*

⁵*Public Schools Reports*, 1950-51, p. 124; 1951-52, p. 127; 1952-53, p. 124.

⁶*Ibid.*

to 1952.¹ Also, regular season-ending demonstrations were still held in their traditional fashion in various communities throughout the province.² A special Pro-Rec demonstration depicting physical fitness, sports, and games was presented as part of the gigantic Vancouver Diamond Jubilee Show in July, 1946; approximately two hundred women and one hundred men trained for and participated in the event.³

Tours

Reminiscent of the gymnastics troupe that had toured Vancouver Island and the Fraser Valley in 1936, a small group of expert gymnasts was organized by Sid Greenwood in 1948-49, and staged demonstrations in Greater Vancouver, the Fraser Valley, Vancouver Island, and Northern B.C.⁴ This was repeated the following year, in the Okanagan and the Kootenays.⁵ Then, in June and July, 1951, a team of fifteen gymnasts toured Northern B.C., visiting nine communities and performing before approximately twelve thousand spectators. The purposes of these demonstrations by this troupe were to show the kind of work being done by the Branch, to stimulate interest and enthusiasm for a recreational programme in the community, and to promote the aims and policies of the Branch. The displays were well-received, and as in 1936, were successful

¹Publicity flyer, Victoria, April 25th, 1952 [PABC: 8.8.5e, No. 131].

²*Public Schools Report*, 1951-52, p. 127.

³Letter to Ian Eisenhardt, National Physical Fitness Director, Ottawa, from Jerry Mathisen, Pro-Rec Provincial Supervisor for Men, Vancouver, June 24th, 1946 [PAC: RG 29/826/214-1-9/Part 1].

⁴*Public Schools Report*, 1948-49, p. 123.

⁵*Public Schools Report*, 1949-50, p. 123.

in arousing interest in physical recreation.¹

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL PROGRAMMES

Pro-Rec continued to receive federal funds granted under the authority of the *National Physical Fitness Act*, during the post-war period. British Columbia benefited from the national fitness programme through annual funds to supplement grants to Pro-Rec, and through the distribution of information booklets and reports provided by the Physical Fitness Division.²

In spite of a resolution by the National Council on Physical Fitness that each province establish a physical fitness council, British Columbia did not implement this recommendation; nor was a provincial physical fitness act ever passed in B.C. Pro-Rec continued to operate under general departmental legislation and an order-in-council. This is one reason why the dissolution of Pro-Rec in 1953 was effected so easily and so quickly; no legislative amendments or repeals were required.

While Lee was Pro-Rec Director, he served as the B.C. representative on the National Council on Physical Fitness. When he left in 1949, Phillips was named Acting Director, but was not appointed by the Department of Education to replace Lee on the National Council. Instead, Phillips merely attended meetings as an observer.³ Thus, B.C. did not have a voice in National Council proceedings after September, 1949.

¹*Public Schools Report*, 1950-51, p. 125.

²"Some of the Services Available through the Pro-Rec Branch", *op. cit.*

³Physical Fitness Division, "Annual Report - 1949-50", Appendix 2, p. 1.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Special Events

Once again, a Danish gymnastics team visited B.C., this time in the spring of 1947. Well-received as usual, the gymnasts were themselves impressed by the young members of the St. Mary's Indian School Pro-Rec gymnastics team, and presented the school with a cheque for \$100, to assist in the purchase of equipment.¹ Another outstanding performer, the American dance choreographer, Ted Shawn, made a number of visits to Vancouver; in 1947, his presentations included a series of lecture-demonstrations sponsored by Pro-Rec.²

In 1947, the Recreational and Physical Education Branch organized a provincial "Recreation Week", from March 27th to April 2nd, as a climax to the winter programme of activities. The Exhibition Gardens was the location for the nightly events, which consisted of:

- displays and demonstrations by schools, the University of B.C., the Y.M.C.A., and men's Pro-Rec;
- Pro-Rec men's annual provincial gymnastics championships;
- Pacific Northwest open gymnastics championships;
- Boxing evening;
- Two nights of the annual Pro-Rec Mass Display.

"Recreation Week" was considered a great success and focussed public attention on the fitness programme in British Columbia.³

¹Daily Province, October 4th, 1947, magazine section, p. 2.

²Public Schools Report, 1946-47, p. 129.

³Physical Fitness Division, "Annual Report - 1946-47", *op. cit.*, p. 6.

Community Recreation Development

Public interest in recreation programmes sponsored by communities had started toward the end of the War, and continued to grow throughout this period. In Vancouver, "there was a movement to institute community recreation centres in addition to the summer playgrounds",¹ and in December, 1949, Marpole Community Centre, the first such structure in Vancouver, was officially opened.²

The Recreational and Physical Education Branch responded to this interest, and to internal pressures from the Department of Education, by providing a number of important services to communities wanting to organize recreation centres, as well as to those centres already established. A number of these services have already been described in previous sections under "The Pro-Rec Programme".³ Other services included the organization of a travelling clinic which toured eleven communities in Northern B.C. and the Cariboo district during October and November, 1947. The clinic staff of six included authorities in the areas of community organization, adult education, school health and physical education, men's and women's physical and social recreation, arts and crafts, and school and community drama. Workshops of two to four days in length were held to help solve local problems and to provide programme suggestions to meet local interests and facilities. The clinic was the result of co-operation between the Department of Education and

¹Davis, *The Vancouver Book*, op. cit., p. 387.

²Interview with Terri Clark, Public Information Officer, Vancouver Park Board, December 1st, 1978.

³*Supra*, p. 278.

the University of B.C. Extension Department.¹

Pro-Rec also assisted community centres by sponsoring a provincial Community Centres Conference during the 1948-49 season; this conference brought together over fifty lay and professional people, who discussed organization and administration, and facilities planning for community centres.²

In his first full year as Director, Lee implemented policies designed to meet one of his most important objectives, that of providing direct assistance to communities to aid them in establishing their own recreation programmes, and thus relieve Pro-Rec of this responsibility.

The Branch offered the following services to community centres:

- (1) Advice and direction in the formation of Community Recreational Councils; advice on suitable buildings, on maintenance costs, and on necessary equipment.
- (2) This department will engage, to the best of its ability and within its budget, a recreational leader, or will advise the Council of suitable applicants for the position.
- (3) If the Community Council wishes to engage the recreational leader itself, this office may contribute in part toward the salary of the leader.³

The salary contribution was \$50 per month, for a full-time Community Director; funds for capital expenditure and maintenance were not available from government sources.⁴ The number of directors thus assisted varied from year to year; eight received this grant in 1949-50,⁵ and

¹Public Schools Report, 1947-48, p. 117; see also A. Batcheler, Pro-Rec press release, September 24th, 1947, *op. cit.* [PAC: RG 29/829/214-1-9/Part 1].

²Public Schools Report, 1948-49, p. 123.

³Public Schools Report, 1946-47, p. 130.

⁴Canada, Department of National Health and Welfare, Physical Fitness Division, "Recreation, Physical Education, and School Health Education in Canada" (mimeographed), 1952, p. 148.

⁵Physical Fitness Division, "Annual Report - 1949-50", Appendix 2, p. 5.

twelve in 1952-53.¹ The overall programme to encourage communities in the development of their own recreational programmes had substantial success, for by 1948-49, the number of cities, villages, and districts in B.C. promoting community recreation programmes was one hundred; of these, thirty-four employed full-time directors, and another eight employed part-time directors.²

EVENTS LEADING TO THE DISSOLUTION OF PRO-REC

Throughout the entire post-war period, Pro-Rec had been the subject of various forms of criticism, in spite of its growing membership and sustained popularity. This criticism was not particularly well-publicized, but it had important effects, nevertheless, coming as it did from several influential sources. One of these was the Vancouver School Board, which had never been more than lukewarm in its response to Pro-Rec, and which became very critical when the junior programme was launched. Another critical voice came from the Vancouver Y.M.C.A., which was always concerned about the Pro-Rec emphasis on gymnastics activities; the "Y" felt that this constituted a publicly-financed infringement on its traditional territory.³ Pro-Rec had always had its detractors in the provincial legislature, as well, and critical references to government support of recreational activities appeared from time to time.

¹Public Schools Report, 1952-53, p. 123.

²National Physical Fitness Council, "Annual Report - 1948-49", Appendix 2, p. 1.

³Interview with Ernest Lee, June 28th, 1976.

Perhaps one of the most telling sources of criticism was seen in the lack of support accorded Pro-Rec by physical educators. Those teachers, university faculty members, and local supervisors of school physical education who were in a position to influence the attitudes of elected officials and the general public tended to be critical of Pro-Rec, its programme, its centralization, and the educational background of its instructors.¹

In the minds of many influential people, Pro-Rec was perceived as a Depression-based project which had served its purpose by the time World War II was over. The growing demands for new forms of community recreation, particularly for the community centre concept, when added to the long-standing criticisms described above, produced an attitude in the Department of Education that questioned the existing programme and prompted a search for a drastically-altered service. When Lee was appointed Director, he was told by his supervisors to change Pro-Rec's directions. He was also advised that Pro-Rec's days were numbered, that "the handwriting was on the wall".² Later, Phillips was given the same understanding when he was told to hold things together, because some changes were coming.³

The first overt indication of impending change was the appointment on October 5th, 1951, of a three-man investigating committee,⁴

¹Interviews with Gordon Brandreth, Hilda Keatley, Ernest Lee, Robert Osborne, and Maurice Van Vliet.

²Interview with Ernest Lee, June 28th, 1976.

³Interview with R.J. Phillips, May 19th, 1977.

⁴The committee consisted of H.L. Campbell, who became Deputy Minister of Education in 1953, R. Sharp, Vancouver Superintendent of Schools, and H.P. Johns, Director of Adult Educational and Vocational Guidance.

assigned to examine the policies and programmes of the Recreational and Physical Education Branch, "with a view to thorough re-organization."¹ This committee held three meetings in Vancouver with Pro-Rec staff and others associated with the programme, and visited sixteen physical recreation centres to observe classes.² The findings of the committee were generally critical of Pro-Rec, as the following typical excerpts illustrate:

. . . the Branch may be said to be characterized by a programme emphasizing physical fitness to the almost total exclusion of other forms of recreation, to a policy that involves the government providing free or near-free recreational activities, and to a conviction that sheer numbers is the major criteria [sic] upon which success is to be judged.³

Adequate training of supervisors, a broader concept of recreation, and a clear definition of the degree and type of supervision to be expected would appear to be a necessity.⁴

There can be no question that a vigorous training and recruitment policy is necessary. In the view of the committee, the recruiting and training of community recreation leaders might well be a major concern of the Branch, but the wisdom of spending government funds on the present plan of training is doubted. Furthermore, any programme adopted hereafter should be one broad enough to include the many phases of recreation available to communities and should not be limited to physical fitness, nor organized entirely in separate classes for men and women.⁵

The committee recognized that special conditions in certain areas may indicate the necessity of embarking upon a recreational programme for school youth, or even pre-school children. However, as a general policy, the attempt to attract as many children as possible to classes held by the Branch cannot be endorsed.⁶

¹"Report of the Pro-Rec Investigating Committee" first draft (typed), n.d. (pre-dates November, 1952), p. 1.

²*Ibid.*, p. 1.

³*Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 12.

There is considerable duplication on the part of the Provincial-Recreation services and those of other agencies, such as night schools, parks boards, and community associations of various kinds. There are numerous examples of programmes being offered free of charge by this Branch and identical programmes being operated by other agencies on a self-sustaining basis involving the payment of fees by participants. On occasion, these parallel classes are held in the same building!¹

As a general recommendation, the committee stated that the Branch should regard its role primarily as one of leadership for the out-of-school population, and that the present system of classes operated by the Branch did not warrant further support.²

In November, 1952, Fairey, Deputy Minister of Education, issued his "Report on the Recreation and Physical Education Branch, commonly known as 'Pro-Rec'". In this report, he reiterated many of the statements made by the Investigating Committee, expanded on a modern view of the function of government in adult recreation and physical fitness, and proposed the following re-organization of the existing programme:

1. Reorganize the Pro-Rec and place it in a new Community Programmes Division of the Department of Education.
2. Discontinue all free Pro-Rec classes but extend the policy of dividing the Province into areas with a District Consultant in each, whose duty it is to stimulate and encourage the development of self-supporting local recreational and keep-fit organizations.
3. Continue the policy of making small monthly grants of \$50.00 to combined Local Community Recreational Groups who employ a full-time Director or who need some little assistance in getting started.
4. Assume responsibility for training local physical and recreational leaders who under the direction of and in the employ of local organizations can work in the local communities.³

He also submitted a budget proposal for 1953-54, which, together with

¹*Ibid.*, p. 13.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 15, 16.

³Fairey, "Report of the Recreation and Physical Education Branch", *op. cit.*, p. 5.

the above recommendations, became the foundation for the new Branch the following year. Table 24 contains this budget proposal, as well as the previous estimates approved for Pro-Rec for 1952-53. This new budget not only reduced the provincial appropriation to the Branch by forty-three per cent, but it also effectively eliminated the free Pro-Rec centres, for rental and equipment were removed from the grant, as well as salaries for full- and part-time instructors.¹

Fairey's report, based on an investigation initiated under the Minister of Education for a Liberal-Conservative government, was presented, in late 1952, to the Minister of Education for the new Social Credit government. That government had just come to power in the July election of 1952, and held a minority position as it approached the presentation of its first full budget and new education policies. The new government was not sympathetic to programmes that were closely associated with the previous government, especially anything initiated by the Liberal party, and had fully intended to disband the government recreation scheme entirely. They were prevailed upon to take a second look, however,² and did agree to the new concept proposed by Fairey, including substantially reduced financial support.

On February 19th, 1953, the announcement that Pro-Rec would be radically changed, and its budget drastically curtailed, was included in the budget speech and came as a complete surprise to the public and

¹*Ibid.*, p. 6.

²Interview with Jim Panton, Director, Community Programmes Branch, and former Pro-Rec Regional Supervisor for Okanagan, Victoria, May 13th, 1977.

TABLE 24

ESTIMATES FOR ADULT RECREATION PROGRAMMES: 1952-53 AND 1953-54

Category of Expenditure	1952-53 (Pro-Rec) ¹	1953-54 (C.P.D.) ²
Salaries	\$102,969	\$47,064
Recreational grant		24,000
Office expenses	3,500	3,000
Travelling expenses	9,000	10,000
Leadership training	2,400	8,000
Printing and Publications	5,000	2,000
Rentals	12,623	
Physical Education supplies	7,000	
Office furniture and equipment	430	
Motor vehicle and accessories	2,300	
Incidentals and contingencies	2,000	
School health and physical educ.	<u>750</u>	<u> </u>
Gross Budget	147,972	\$94,064
Less revenue	4,000	
Less Federal Grant	<u>16,000</u>	<u>19,296</u>
Net Budget	<u>\$127,972</u>	<u>\$74,768</u>

¹Sessional Papers, 1951-52, Estimates - 1952-53, p. Z 55.²Fairey, *op. cit.*, p. 6, for Community Programmes Division (later, Branch).

to most of the Pro-Rec staff.¹ Mrs. Tilly Rolston, Minister of Education, had intimated earlier that some changes would be made,² but the extent and effect of the budget reduction had not been anticipated.³ The resultant public outcry was vehement, and came in the form of impassioned letters to the editors of the major newspapers, opposition on the floor of the Legislature, and spokesmen for agencies affiliated with Pro-Rec. Members of all opposition parties spoke up against the changes, as did groups such as the Canadian Legion,⁴ the Oakalla Prison Farm,⁵ and Community Chest officials.⁶ But the loudest cry came from members of Pro-Rec centres, especially women members. Newspapers carried many dozens of protest letters, petitions were organized, and considerable pressure was exerted in attempts to force the government to reverse its position. The following excerpts from letters give some indication of the nature of the concern felt by many:

[Keep] this wonderful and unexpendable service to the people out of the reach of political plunder it is a criminal act to limit the opportunity for folks to get out and get to know their neighbor on a badminton court or a gym floor.⁷

¹*Daily Province*, February 19th, 1953; interviews with Thomas Ruben, May 25th, 1977; Grace Walton, May 30th, 1977; Nora Johstone, former Pro-Rec instructress in West Vancouver, Vancouver, November 22nd, 1978.

²*Vancouver Sun*, February 4th, 1953, p. 4.

³*Daily Colonist*, February 20th, 1953, p. 11.

⁴*Daily Province*, February 5th, 1953, p. 25.

⁵*Daily Province*, March 13th, 1953, p. 28.

⁶*Daily Province*, February 26th, 1953, p. 23.

⁷*Vancouver Sun*, February 4th, 1953, p. 4.

[Pro-Rec is] one of the most wonderful things Vancouver and the North Shore have to keep the young people and the married women in good health.¹

Surely the good Pro-Rec has done far outweighs the amount of money needed to keep it growing.²

We implore Mrs. Rolston to reconsider.³

Not all letters were opposed to the changes, however. Many citizens felt that the provincial coffers should not support recreation programmes. Said one writer: "If they must have Pro-Rec, why expect me and other hardworking folk to pay for it when to us it is silly nonsense."⁴ And another writer, asserting that people could now afford to pay for their physical recreation, stated that "paternalism can go too far."⁵

Protest letters continued to be directed against the government throughout February, March and April, but Rolston persisted with her new scheme. On March 7th, plans were announced for the complete reorganization of the Pro-Rec staff. These plans were extreme in their effect; three of the full-time staff members had their jobs terminated, two were hired as teachers, and nine others became the regional consultants for the new Community Programmes Branch. In addition, the services of all part-time instructors and pianists were no longer required.⁶ The principal effect of the change was to completely

¹*Vancouver Sun*, February 23rd, 1953, p. 4.

²*Daily Colonist*, February 27th, 1953, p. 4.

³*Vancouver Sun*, February 28th, 1953, p. 4.

⁴*Vancouver Sun*, February 26th, 1953, p. 4

⁵*Victoria Daily Times*, March 2nd, 1953, p. 4.

⁶*Vancouver Sun*, March 7th, 1953, p. 23.

dismantle Pro-Rec, in spite of government claims that it was merely being re-organized.¹ The Mass Displays were not held that year, and when September came around, no free recreation centres were opened anywhere in the province. Rolston had stated that the new Community Programmes Branch would simply re-organize the old centres under local sponsorship,² but this did not happen; in most communities, a few years were to pass before new fitness and recreation programmes could be established, and by then many Pro-Rec members had lost their regular exercise habit.³ Others gravitated to night school fitness classes, which could be attended for a fee.⁴

An ironic postscript was written to the dissolution of the nineteen-year-old Pro-Rec programme. After the plans for the new Branch had been announced, a provincial election was called in July, 1953. For this election, Rolston campaigned on her education policies and justified her treatment of Pro-Rec by claiming that it had been an "octopus around the government's neck".⁵ She was soundly criticized by opposition candidates, even though Pro-Rec had been a very small part of the total Department of Education, and even though the budget cut was an insignificant \$57,000. Mrs. Rolston was defeated in that 1953 election,⁶

¹*Vancouver Sun*, March 13th, 1953, p. 4.

²*Vancouver Sun*, April 18th, 1953, p. 27.

³Interview with Nora Johnstone, November 22nd, 1978.

⁴Interview with Grace Walton, May 30th, 1977.

⁵*Vancouver Sun*, April 30th, 1953, p. 12.

⁶Mrs. Rolston was preparing to run again in a by-election, but she died in October, 1953, after many years of public service.

and it was said by some to be due, in part, to her unpopular and arbitrary elimination of the Pro-Rec programme.¹

Although the Social Credit government did not initiate the actions that resulted in the elimination of the Pro-Rec programme, it was far from sympathetic to the Branch, and would have withdrawn all recreation services if Fairey had not prevailed upon government members to retain certain features. This political action had been predicted by Weir as far back as 1940, when he stated, in a personal letter to Eisenhardt, that "if the provincial [Liberal] government were defeated, the recreational scheme would probably be dropped or drastically curtailed."² This action was finally taken by the Social Credit Government on August 11th, 1953, when, by Order-in-Council, it decreed that the Physical Education and Recreational Branch of the Department of Education would be re-organized as the Community Programmes Branch, and that government-operated recreation classes would be discontinued.³ Brought into effect in 1934 by departmental regulation, Pro-Rec was easily dissolved by the same simple process, and the programme that had been British Columbia's unique contribution to physical recreation in Canada ceased to exist.

¹Report to G.F. Davidson, Deputy Minister of Welfare, Ottawa, from Doris Plewes, Acting Director of Physical Fitness, Ottawa, August 25th, 1953 [PAC: RG 29/826/214-1-9/Pt. 1].

²Letter to Ian Eisenhardt, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, from George Weir, Minister of Education, Victoria, May 15th, 1940 (Eisenhardt Collection).

³British Columbia, Executive Council Order-in-Council No. 1890, Victoria, August 11th, 1953; see Appendix L.

SUMMARY

With the return to a peacetime society, Pro-Rec broadened its scope to include greater support for recreation programmes at new community centres throughout the province. The regular programme at Pro-Rec centres returned to its pre-war form, with more emphasis given to sports activities. Provincial school physical education and athletics were also added to the operations of the Branch; this led to the sponsorship of provincial high school championships, and to the provision of sports clinics for teachers and coaches.

The membership pattern of Pro-Rec changed during the post-war period. Junior members increased proportionately, while adult members, and particularly men, decreased. The Directorship was held by three different men: Jerry Mathisen, Ernest Lee, and R.J. Phillips.

In the early 1950's, concern about the future of Pro-Rec led to the appointment of an Investigating Committee for the Department of Education. Its report, recommending drastic changes, coincided with the election of a new political party that was not sympathetic to the Pro-Rec programme. As a result, Pro-Rec was discontinued in 1953, and replaced by the Community Programmes Branch. Although Pro-Rec had provided a valuable and popular service, in the view of its critics it had become too narrow in scope, too inflexible in its operation, and too remote from current developments in public recreation and in municipal governments.

CHAPTER VI

PERSPECTIVES ON SELECTED TOPICS

This chapter examines several factors that operated during more than one time period of Pro-Rec's existence, and also discusses special problems and situations that had significant and long-term consequences for Pro-Rec. In addition, many of the developments given only brief mention in preceding chapters are discussed more fully, and interpretations are presented with respect to important features of the programme.

NATURE OF PRO-REC

The Ingredients for Success

One of the most prominent features of Pro-Rec was the success of its promotional efforts. During its nineteen-year existence, it attracted many thousands of men and women to its centres, and served as the inspiration or model for programmes at the federal level and in other provinces. Its scope was equally large, and it provided a wide range of physical recreation opportunities for dozens of communities in the province, including many places which had never before had public recreation facilities.

The success of the Pro-Rec programme must be examined in the light of the social circumstances of the Depression because the programme was created to meet needs generated by these social circumstances. Hence, the common reference to the Pro-Rec in later years as a

"depression-years measure".¹

It is apparent from the strong response to Pro-Rec that, during the 1930's, many British Columbians needed one or more of the following:

1. a place in which to spend enforced leisure time (men);
2. a regular means of escaping the routine demands of housework (women);
3. an opportunity to improve personal physical condition;
4. an opportunity to improve sports skills;
5. occasions for social intercourse; and
6. the experience of participating on an organized team in a sport.

In addition, it is clear that many individuals could only have these needs met if there were no personal costs involved, and the feature of free physical recreation was fundamental to its success.² Before Pro-Rec was introduced, opportunities to meet all of the above needs had existed, but many of those people who subsequently became members of Pro-Rec could not afford them; when Pro-Rec came along, these were the individuals who flocked to the centres.

The provision of free activities to meet common needs was not the only reason for Pro-Rec's success. With extensive publicity campaigns and special events such as the Mass Displays, Pro-Rec tried to educate the people of British Columbia about the importance of physical fitness, and to make them more conscious of this feature of positive health. In addition, the programme contained a strong element of paternalism, implying that Pro-Rec's approach to physical fitness, through European

¹Fairey, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

²Pro-Rec was "free" only in the sense that members were not required to pay fees or an admission charge. The tax-payer paid indirectly, because Pro-Rec's funds were derived from government grants and allocations.

gymnastics, was the best approach, and that the administrators and chief instructors best knew what the people needed, how it should be taught, and how it should be organized. While that attitude became less acceptable in the 1950's, it was quite appropriate in the mid-1930's. People were prepared to be told what to do and how to do it; anything that would help them become better people in some way was only too welcome, after five years of economic and social problems. Well into the late 1940's, Canadians tended to accept the pronouncements of authorities without question, and certainly during the Depression, they looked for guidance to any person or organization which could provide the comfort of paternal leadership. In addition, the kind of activities provided at Pro-Rec — gymnastics and calisthenics — were familiar to most Canadians at that time, for the school physical education programmes were composed of the military drill and gymnastics encouraged by the Strathcona Trust Fund. Therefore, lack of choice in activities when compared to community centre programmes in later decades, was obviously not a problem in the 1930's.

Pro-Rec also stressed the provision of activities for the ordinary person — the unskilled, the unfit. The programme was aimed at the majority of the population, those who did not have opportunities for physical recreation, either because they could not afford it or because the community did not provide similar programmes, and publicity releases and reports constantly stressed the philosophy of activities for the many, rather than for the few.

In essence, then, Pro-Rec leaders were saying to the people of British Columbia: "most of you are suffering, physically and socially, from the traumatic effects of an economic depression. To alleviate this

suffering, you should become more physically fit. Our programme is the best one in which to develop that fitness and our activities are the best activities. Come to our centres; they are good for you, they are aimed at your level of ability, and most important — they are free!"

The ideas implicit in this message changed very little during Pro-Rec's existence; only the demands of society changed. From being sufferers of the Depression, the Pro-Rec population became contributors to the War effort, and then builders of a new and better world. But the programme was still free, paternalistic, based on gymnastics, and aimed at the needs of the non-athlete.

Although these were the essential ingredients for success in the early years, they would not have been enough without good administration and organization, and excellent publicity. These added features combined to produce an effective whole, with enough momentum to carry the programme through the War years and to sustain it, at a somewhat reduced level, during the post-war period.

Much of the credit for the success experienced by Pro-Rec must be given to the highly successful and extremely popular Mass Displays held in Vancouver after the close of each winter season. More than any other single feature of Pro-Rec, these displays brought the programme to the attention of the public at large, and served as an effective promotional device for physical fitness and physical recreation. The smartly-executed men's numbers demonstrated the level of excellence in gymnastics that members could achieve, and produced spectacular routines that entertained and impressed audiences; the women's routines, equally entertaining, featured mass exercises and dances, designed less to demonstrate excellence than to show the public the ordinary activities

produced at Pro-Rec centres.¹

These Displays were intended to achieve a number of objectives. The most important of these was promotion of the programme to the general public, showing audiences how government funds were being put to good use. Another important objective was the purpose and direction given to the winter programme by the need to prepare and polish routines that would be used in the Mass Display at the end of the year; these routines were learned by instructors at Summer School and then presented to members at their centres. A more subtle objective, as explained by Eisenhardt, was the need to generate positive publicity so as to persuade the provincial government to increase its funding of Pro-Rec.² Finally, Hilda Keatley stated that, when the men, in 1950, chose not to participate in the Mass Display, she continued with the women's groups because that was one of the most important ways in which new members were recruited each year.³

It is apparent, from the local and national publicity received by the Displays, that they were successful in bringing Pro-Rec to the public's attention. It is also likely that they did help to increase membership and funding. Although the concept was not original, being modelled after the more spectacular European outdoor versions, these Pro-Rec displays were unique in Canada. Their appeal was greatest during the Depression, as a novelty and an inexpensive form of entertainment; and also during the War, when their military form and content matched the mood of the times.

¹"Pro-Rec", *op. cit.*, p. 3.

²Interview with Ian Eisenhardt, December 13th, 1976.

³Interview with Hilda Keatley, May 23rd, 1977.

Over the eighteen years that they were presented, these Mass Displays were held in a number of Vancouver locations, the most satisfactory of which was the Vancouver Forum. Table 25 illustrates the variations in numbers of participants, spectators, and numbers of nights, as well as the different locations used. The format of the Displays remained much the same as in the early years, the only significant change occurring in 1950, when the men withdrew.

Another interesting feature of Pro-Rec was its tendency to expand into any related area of volunteer physical recreation where a vacuum existed, and to take upon itself responsibility for providing more and varied forms of activities. Examples of this phenomenon were: a steady growth in activities offered in the sports programme; special wartime activities such as Red Cross units; the establishment of programmes in institutions such as the provincial prison farm; the programme of physical education in Catholic Church parochial schools; and the organization of provincial high school sports championships. Toward the end of its time, Pro-Rec took on many of the responsibilities later assumed by the provincial federation of sports governing bodies, such as the provision of meeting rooms and facilities for duplicating and mailing information.¹ It became, in a sense, a microcosm of the world of physical recreation and sport, providing programmes and services for almost every kind of organized or unorganized activity. Under the direct or indirect aegis of Pro-Rec, British Columbians could:

1. learn to swim, ski, bowl, play badminton, among other sports;
2. improve their level of physical fitness;

¹Interview with R.J. Phillips, May 19th, 1979.

TABLE 25
VANCOUVER MASS DISPLAYS: 1935 TO 1952¹

Year	Participants (estimated)	Spectators (estimated)	Number of Nights	Location
1935	500	n.a.	1	Beatty St. Drill Hall
1936	600	3,000	1	Seaforth Armory
1937	800	3,000	1	Armory
1938	1,500-2,000 ²	6,000	1	Vancouver Forum
1939	2,000	5,000	1	Forum
1940	2,240	12,000	3	Forum
1941	1,500	5,000	1	Forum
1942	600	1,800	3	Vancouver Athletic Club
1943	600+	1,200	2	Vancouver Athletic Club
1944	1,000	5,000	1	Forum
1945	1,500	5,000	1	Forum
1946	1,200	n.a.	1	Forum
1947	700+	2,000+	1	Exhibition Gardens
1948	1,500	5,000+	1	Forum
1949	2,000	5,000+	1	Forum
1950	1,500 (women)	n.a.	2	Gardens
1951	n.a. (women)	n.a.	2	Gardens
1952	n.a. (women)	n.a.	2	Gardens

¹Sources: *Public Schools Reports*, Vancouver newspapers, Mass Display Programmes.

²Estimates vary with sources.

3. compete in a community athletic league on Pro-Rec teams in sports such as basketball, soccer, and field hockey;
4. participate in programmes offered at community centres directed by individuals whose salaries were subsidized by Pro-Rec;
5. stay overnight at a youth hostel;
6. occupy otherwise empty hours of confinement in a penal institution;
7. participate in Pro-Rec championships in a wide range of activities, and especially in gymnastic competitions;
8. learn to dance;
9. participate in provincial high school championships.

With a programme of this magnitude, it is not surprising that Pro-Rec was constantly responding to accusations that it was over-lapping into areas covered by other agencies.¹ On the other hand, it is not difficult to understand why Pro-Rec was so successful; its programme was so broad that it was certain to appeal to a very large part of the population.

The Particular Appeal to Women

One important characteristic of Pro-Rec was its strong appeal to women who wanted some form of Keep Fit activities. This became noticeable during the 1930's, when the registration for women surpassed that for men, a situation that continued to the end. Fairey referred to this in his report, when he stated that:

. . . Pro-Rec has made a very worthwhile contribution to the health, happiness and welfare of marginal groups in the low economic bracket . . . particularly women and children who had no other social or community life outside the home.²

¹Public Schools Report, 1945-46, p. 137.

²Fairey, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

Women flocked to Pro-Rec centres in large numbers, and remained the dominant group. Table 26 lists the numbers of men and women members enrolled each year, from 1934-35 to 1945-46; bracketed figures represent the percentages for each category of the total registrations. After 1945-46, registration figures were not listed separately, but an examination of the numbers of men's and women's centres reveals the same trend to 1952-53, and it may be assumed that enrollment numbers retained the same relationship, that is, with female members outnumbering male members.

TABLE 26
REGISTRATIONS FOR MEN AND WOMEN: 1934-35 TO 1945-46¹

Year	Men	Women	Total
1934-35	1,903 (68.75)	865 (31.25)	2,768
1935-36	2,729 (49.44)	2,791 (50.56)	5,520
1936-37	4,690 (44.75)	5,791 (55.25)	10,481
1937-38	7,834 (36.45)	13,659 (63.55)	21,493
1938-39	9,827 (36.63)	17,004 (63.37)	26,831
1939-40	n.a.	n.a.	21,183
1940-41	6,829 (34.95)	12,713 (65.05)	19,542
1941-42	4,257 (32.03)	9,035 (67.97)	13,292
1942-43	4,456 (44.76)	5,499 (55.24)	9,955
1943-44	4,927 (43.08)	6,510 (56.92)	11,437
1944-45	8,424 (44.01)	10,718 (55.99)	19,142
1945-46	10,906 (43.60)	14,107 (56.40)	25,013

¹See Appendix D.

Other manifestations of the domination of Pro-Rec by women were newspaper reports and articles which tended to emphasize women in photographs and in the text. At Mass Displays, women participants often outnumbered men. And in 1953, when the Social Credit government announced plans to close Pro-Rec centres, the voices raised in protest through letters to newspapers were almost entirely those of women.

This strong support by women stemmed from two main sources. The first was the particular appeal that Pro-Rec had for housewives. Especially during the Depression, many women were confined to their homes by the demands of housekeeping and motherhood, and by the reduction of income which precluded many forms of social activity. In addition, the economic pressures of the times meant that working women were forced back into the home, so that available positions could be taken by men. For many families, the quality of life deteriorated so badly that the struggle for existence took precedence over the previous decade's struggle for women's rights.¹ Pro-Rec centres offered many of these house-bound women an opportunity to escape from the routine chores for a while, and to have some social life that was otherwise denied them. Hilda Keatley, in discussing this feature of Pro-Rec membership, recounted a meeting with the husband of a former Pro-Rec member who thanked Mrs. Keatley for what Pro-Rec had done to preserve his wife's sanity during the Depression years.² Ruben, chief instructor for the Fraser Valley, felt that the social side, the "outing", was the

¹Margaret E. MacLellan, "History of Women's Rights in Canada," in *Cultural Tradition and Political History of Women in Canada*, Volume 8, *Studies of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada* (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1971), p. 25.

²Interview with Hilda Keatley, February 21st, 1976.

chief reason for greater enrollment by women than by men.¹

The other source of appeal to women lay in the opportunities for sport and exercise provided by Pro-Rec which were not otherwise available for women during the late 1930's. The 1920's and early '30's had been periods of increased participation by Canadian women in sports. According to Cochrane, *et al* ". . . the years 1923 to 1935 could really be considered the Golden Age of sports activity for Canadian women;"² but as the bad times of the Depression continued, there was a resurgence of conservative ideas about women in sports, and a hostile view became evident.³ As a result, women were discouraged from involvement in sports in the mid-1930's,⁴ and this attitude remained through World War II and on into the 1950's.⁵ It is therefore likely that many young women in B.C. who would have participated in organized sports programmes took advantage of the Pro-Rec centres as a source of physical recreation. Lee supported this when he stated that the women members of Pro-Rec were more conscious of the importance of physical fitness; they had been neglected for so long, whereas the men had been able to participate in sports programmes.⁶

Unique Features of Pro-Rec

Direct Service to Public. Pro-Rec held many features in common

¹Daily Province, October 4th, 1947, magazine section, p. 1.

²Jean Cochrane, *et al*, *Women in Canadian Sports* (Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, Limited, 1977), p. 35.

³*Ibid.*, p. 49

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁶Interview with Ernest Lee, June 28th, 1976.

with other provincial and physical recreation schemes during the period under study, but in many other ways, Pro-Rec was unique. The most obvious example of this was the provision of a direct service to the participant, with the government agency presenting the actual physical recreation programme. In most other provinces, the provincial agency was at least one step removed from the participant, with the local municipality or local community council assuming responsibility for a programme funded or supported to some degree by a government branch,¹ but in British Columbia, provincial funding and direct local programming responsibilities were assumed by the same agency. Pro-Rec hired the instructors, rented the facilities, and provided the equipment for the centres, and these expenditures appeared as direct charges against the province under the Department of Education accounts.²

During the post-war period, the activities of the Branch were expanded to include financial and administrative support for activities sponsored by other organizations, such as community recreation councils and high school athletic associations, but the free Pro-Rec centres continued to be the primary component of the programme.³

Centralization of Programmes. Accompanying this direct aspect

¹Baka, *op. cit.*, and McFarland, *op. cit.*, *passim*. Alberta's Health and Recreation Branch paid a "remuneration to approved health and recreation leaders conducting approved activities in the communities." Baka, *op. cit.*, pp. 149-150.

²A typical statement of expenditures, for 1942-43, lists items such as: Salaries for instructors: \$7,458.17; Rental of Christ Church Parish Hall: \$31.50; Marpole Coal Co. Ltd.: \$65.00; Williams Piano House: \$90.00. British Columbia, Legislative Assembly, *Sessional Papers: 1942-43, Public Accounts* (Victoria: King's Printer, 1944), pp. EE 82-84.

³Nominal fees were collected from time to time, but these were not compulsory, and the total of funds generated was insignificant.

of Pro-Rec was another unique feature, that of a centralized programme, highly organized and controlled from the Pro-Rec head office. All instructors were required to attend Summer School prior to the start of the winter season. There, the programme for the coming year was presented, having been prepared by the head office staff. The instructors were coached in the new material, and the final culmination of the year's work, the annual Mass Display, was outlined for them. It remained only for the instructor to proceed through the programme to its planned conclusion. Even the rate of progress was pre-determined, especially in the women's centres. Hilda Keatley stated that she could visit any Vancouver centre at any time, and anticipate the level of progression at which the group would be working.¹ This centralization of control would not have been possible without the required Summer School training, and the provision of extensive printed materials to cover the year's programme. In addition, the basic activities — Danish and Swedish gymnastics, Keep Fit exercises, apparatus work, and prescribed folk and ballroom dances — were of a kind that could be regulated quite easily.

Political Connections

Mention has already been made of the close connection between Pro-Rec and the Liberal party, which formed the Government of British Columbia from 1935 to 1941 and which then joined with the Conservative party in 1941 to form a coalition government from 1941 to 1952. This political connection was alluded to by Weir in 1940, when he warned Eisenhardt that if the Liberal Government were to fall, Pro-Rec would be

¹Interview with Hilda Keatley, February 21st, 1976.

dropped or curtailed.¹ Pro-Rec's political affiliation was unique, in comparison not only to other provincial recreation schemes, but also to most other branches of government in B.C.

Manifestations of this phenomenon appeared early in Pro-Rec's history. In discussing the values of Pro-Rec, a 1936 editorial in the *Vancouver Sun* stated:

If the Pattulo Government had done nothing else to justify its existence this promotion of physical education among the young people of British Columbia would have stood out as a vital and splendid piece of government.²

One year later, in the provincial election campaign, Nancy Hodges, a Liberal member for Victoria, used the Pro-Rec programme in her election campaign speeches, when she called it "one of the outstanding contributions of the present government to the health of the province."³

During the 1930's and the early '40's, Pro-Rec newspaper articles and Mass Display programmes often featured photographs of Premier Pattulo and Minister of Education Weir.⁴ The Mass Displays, highly-publicized and well-attended, invariably included one or two political figures as special guests and main speakers. In 1937, both Pattulo and Weir attended the Display,⁵ and in 1940, Lieutenant-Governor Eric Hamber was featured along with Weir.⁶ In later years, when the national programmes

¹*Supra*, p. 322.

²*Vancouver Sun*, October 22nd, 1936, p. 6.

³*Victoria Daily Times*, May 18th, 1937, p. 10.

⁴For examples, see: *Vancouver Sun*, August 12th, 1937, magazine section, p. 12; "Mass Display Programme", 1941.

⁵"Mass Display Programme", 1937.

⁶"Mass Display Programme", 1941.

were launched, federal Liberals also appeared on the programmes; Ian Mackenzie, Minister of Veteran Affairs and former Minister of National Health and Welfare, was the 1945 guest,¹ and Paul Martin, Minister of National Health and Welfare, was the federal representative in 1948.² At no time were these appearances questioned; in fact, they were assumed to be logical actions on the part of the governing party. They simply reinforced the fact that Pro-Rec was a Liberal party creation.

Eisenhardt has stated that one reason for the strong and instant support of his plan by the provincial government was that Pattulo's Liberals needed something that they could give to the people of British Columbia during the worse years of the Depression, something that would appeal to the public and yet be very inexpensive. Pro-Rec met these conditions, and the government quickly capitalized on it.³ Gordon Brandreth, former Physical Education Supervisor for Vancouver schools, supported this assessment when he stated that, during the mid-1930's, Pro-Rec was the only thing that the Liberal government had to offer to the people of B.C., and it served that purpose well.⁴

Because Pro-Rec was such a political institution, it occasionally bore the brunt of partisan political influences. Lee stated that pressures to increase the number of centres came from Members of the Legislative Assembly, who wanted centres in their constituencies; to pacify them, the Pro-Rec staff would "scratch around" to set up centres

¹"Mass Display Programme", 1943.

²"Mass Display Programme", 1943.

³Interview with Ian Eisenhardt, December 12th, 1976.

⁴Interview with Gordon Brandreth, May 24th, 1977.

as requested.¹ In the 1930's, two centres were opened as a result of this kind of pressure, against the wishes of the Pro-Rec staff. One was the Prince Rupert centre, which was opened in January, 1936, upon the specific request of Weir, who allocated an extra \$600 to Pro-Rec for this purpose;² this action was the direct result of political pressure brought to bear on Weir.³ In 1936, the mayor of Princeton requested a centre, and Eisenhardt was directed by the Superintendent of Education to visit that town and determine what could be done; Eisenhardt reported that a centre was not feasible there, as there was no gymnasium,⁴ but in 1937, Princeton did get a Pro-Rec centre.⁵ These requests were not unusual, given the popularity of Pro-Rec and its direct association with the Liberal government; Weir was always closely linked with the programme, and he would be expected to respond to the wishes of government members, especially if the requests were positive and in the best interests of both the citizens and the programme.

The close relationship between Weir and Pro-Rec proved to be both an advantage and a disadvantage, for when Weir was defeated in 1941, Pro-Rec suffered somewhat from the loss of its strongest political ally. Weir was succeeded by G.H. Perry as Minister of Education, and in 1942, Perry presented an education budget in which, for the first time, Pro-Rec estimates were reduced. When criticized by the opposition for this

¹Interview with Ernest Lee, June 28th, 1976.

²Eisenhardt Personal Reports, January 15th, 1936.

³Interview with Paul King, September 1st, 1976.

⁴Letter to S.J. Willis, Superintendent of Education, Victoria, from Ian Eisenhardt, Director of Pro-Rec, Vancouver, July 7th, 1936 [PABC: 8.9.4 - 8.9.5g].

⁵"Comprehensive Report", 1938-39, p. 58.

action, he stated:

In view of the numbers of men and women who have enlisted and the fact that (Pro-Rec) was designed as an outlet for idle persons, I felt that this was the only place where I could justify the reduction.¹

Clearly, Perry was not as sympathetic toward Pro-Rec as Weir had been; a reduction for this kind of reason would not have been implemented by Weir, and when he returned to the Legislature and to the Minister of Education in 1945, he was able to effect a large increase in the Pro-Rec estimates; this coincided, fortunately, with the end of the War.

Danish Inspiration for Pro-Rec

In an earlier discussion on the basic Pro-Rec programme of the 1930's, reference was made to the similarities between that programme and the Danish gymnastics of Niels Bukh. The influence of the Danish system was noted in the structure of the class session, the types of exercises and leader commands employed, and the claimed objectives of the gymnastics portion of the total Pro-Rec programme.²

In speeches and articles, Eisenhardt regularly referred to the European programmes which had served as models for Pro-Rec, and it was the Danish system which was mentioned most frequently. Since Eisenhardt was a Dane, it is likely that the Danish programme was actually the chief source of inspiration for Pro-Rec, and this is supported by the type of activities presented. In a 1939 article, Eisenhardt made the following statement about the gymnastics exercises used in Pro-Rec centres:

¹*News Herald*, February 4th, 1942, p. 20.

²*Supra*, pp. 105, 108.

It must be admitted, naturally, that the modern type of exercises is a far cry from the old type which used to prevail in school gymnasiums throughout the country. The Danish system, on which these exercises are based, for sheer rhythmic and timing cannot be surpassed. . . .¹

Other Pro-Rec supporters of Danish gymnastics were Jerry Mathisen, a Norwegian gymnast who advocated the system developed by Bukh,² and Thomas Ruben, chief instructor for the Fraser Valley, who was Danish and who had attended Bukh's gymnastics school in Denmark.³ Some additional Danish influence was contributed by two Vancouver instructors, Dorothiruth Meilicke and Phyllis Sanderson, who each attended summer courses in gymnastics in Denmark during the late 1930's.⁴

Eisenhardt appeared to be influenced more by the Danish folk high school concept than by the actual activities incorporated in the gymnastics system. His own education background was not in physical education or gymnastics leadership, and it is not likely that he was specifically knowledgeable about details and techniques used by Danish gymnastics leaders. Rather, he seemed to take his inspiration from the popular Danish system of adult education, the Folk High School, which received international attention and acclaim following World War I.

The Danish Folk High School movement began in 1851, with the establishment of the first adult school in Denmark by Bishop N.F.S. Grundtvig. The movement grew in influence after 1864, and by

¹*Gymnast*, IV:8 (December, 1938), p. 10.

²*Gymnast*, I:4 (February 24th, 1936), p. 1.

³Interview with Thomas Ruben, May 25th, 1977.

⁴*Victoria Daily Times*, December 12th, 1936, p. 14; see also interview with Phyllis Sanderson, May 24th, 1977.

1934, there were sixty folk schools in Denmark.¹ These boarding schools were open to anyone over eighteen years of age, and their purposes were to raise the educational level of the rural population of Denmark, and to foster pride in Danish culture and history.²

The success of the Danish Folk High School was derived as much from its enhancement of social and emotional growth as from its intellectual and vocational features. Visitors to Denmark were impressed with the emphasis in the schools on loyalty, integrity and honour; and promoters and students believed that this approach to adult education, in which at its peak over one-third of the Danish population had been enrolled, had contributed significantly to the high level of literacy in that country, to its thriving co-operative movement, to the success of the Danish farmer in world markets, and to the advanced social legislation of Denmark.³

Physical recreation in the form of gymnastics was a feature of the Danish folk school programme,⁴ and was also the primary subject at the Gymnastic Folk School of Niels Bukh, which adjoined the Ollerup Folk School.⁵ The Gymnastic School started in a single building in 1920; it was subsequently expanded and became known as the Ollerup Gymnastic High

¹Ian Eisenhardt, "On Youth Movements", October, 1934 (Eisenhardt Collection).

²R.S. Patterson and L. Wilson, "The Influence of the Danish Folk High School in Canada", *Paedagogica Historica*, XIV:1 (1974), p. 69.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 68-69.

⁴Olive Dame Campbell, *The Danish Folk School* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928), p. 144.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 169.

School.¹ From this school, Bukh's system of gymnastics spread throughout Denmark and around the world. Like all other Danish Folk Schools, Ollerup provided cultural and academic instruction; its speciality was the theory and practice of gymnastics. International tours by Bukh and his students demonstrated the Danish system of gymnastics and impressed physical educators wherever the troupes travelled.² A cross-Canada tour, made in 1931, provided an important stimulus for change in Canadian physical education programmes, and was the impetus for a move away from the formality of Swedish drill. A few years later, the 1933 British syllabus for physical education, which featured Bukh's system, was adopted in Canada, and teachers learned the Danish method of rhythmical exercise routines.³

Meanwhile, Canadians first became interested in the general Danish Folk High School concept in the late 1920's, and in the 1930's efforts were made to establish similar programmes in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and the Maritimes. Although the Canadian models demonstrated significant differences from those in Denmark, they did reflect an appreciation of the Danish ideas, and a realization that opportunities for education were needed for adults in rural communities.⁴ One important result of this interest was the founding, in May, 1934, of the Canadian Adult Education Association.⁵

¹Gerber, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 190-191.

³Cosentino and Howell, *op. cit.* p. 44.

⁴Patterson and Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-73.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 70.

In the Canadian models, physical recreation was also offered in some schools. In Manitoba, in 1933, the Manitou Folk Night School met weekly in the Normal School, and included games, physical drills, and folk dances, while similar schools in Ontario and the Atlantic Provinces provided folk dancing opportunities.¹

It was against this background of sympathetic Canadian awareness of Danish ideas about adult education and physical recreation that Eisenhardt introduced his Pro-Rec scheme, and in his public statements, he revealed his positive bias toward the Danish Folk School concept. In 1934, he said:

[The Danish movement] is a true "youth movement."
 . . . The schools give to the youth an understanding and
 and appreciation of the meaning of life and the world.²

Then, in a 1935 radio address, Eisenhardt declared that "the Danish system [of folk high schools] is a living example of the possibilities in a realistic, effective education".³ Later in that same speech, he suggested that Canadians had much to learn from the Danes when he said:

Denmark is today one of the most literate, one of the most industrious and one of the most prosperous nations in Europe. Such results are entitled to our respect, and their cause should awaken real interest. It does not follow that like results can be obtained elsewhere; but some critical gain to our educational understanding will surely come from a closer knowledge of these schools - their basic factors, their programmes, their spiritual meanings and their essential methods. A particular kind of adult education has accomplished these results in one land; other lands should at least know the facts.⁴

¹*Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.

²Ian Eisenhardt, "On Youth Movements", October, 1934, p. 4. (Eisenhardt Collection).

³Ian Eisenhardt, Radio address, December 11th, 1935, p. 1. (Eisenhardt Collection).

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 2.

A 1937 presentation by Eisenhardt illustrated his conception of a parallel between Pro-Rec and the Danish programme, when he stated that:

The spirit of goodwill and cooperation which reigns in the Centres, and which is encouraged by the instructors, will do much to lift the citizens of British Columbia out of a mental and physical slump, just as the Danish Folk High Schools lift the Danes to a higher standard of civilization.¹

Finally, in a 1937 article in *Health* magazine, Eisenhardt's philosophy of paternal government involvement, in association with favourable references to Danish schools was expressed in the following paragraph:

It is a Government responsibility to look after the welfare of its young people and to provide for them these activities which will form good habits, teach them fair play and build good citizens. The Government should organize and promote these Centres in the Province. You will find some of the spirit of the famous folk high schools in these Centres, although they deal purely with the physical aspect of life.²

In this representative selection of Eisenhardt's statements, significant parallels were drawn between the Danish system and Pro-Rec. Eisenhardt considered the Danish programme of adult education to be singularly successful, and it formed part of his aspirations for Pro-Rec. Although, like other Canadian models of the Danish schools, the actual structure of Pro-Rec bore little resemblance to anything in Denmark, the ideals and general educational aims were very similar: the inculcation of patriotism and national pride, the importance of self-improvement, and the raising of educational standards. It may even be postulated that the Pro-Rec Summer School for instructors corresponded,

¹Ian Eisenhardt, "Education for Leisure", 1937, p. 12 (Eisenhardt Collection).

²Ian Eisenhardt, "Keeping Fit the B.C. Way", *Health*, December, 1937 (reprint), n.p.

in Eisenhardt's view, to Ollerup, a training school for future gymnastics leaders.

LEADERSHIP

Earlier sections of this study entitled "Leadership" have actually been little more than descriptions of administrative functions carried out by appointed government employees; whereas manifestations in Pro-Rec of true leadership, that is, the ability to lead, warrant a fuller discussion.

Ian Eisenhardt

Walter Young stated in his book, *Democracy and Discontent*, that "the leadership ability of an individual is clearly a significant factor in history", but, he added:

No man builds a following from thin air.... Leadership . . . is largely situational. . . . one cannot lead unless the conditions are such that people are ready to follow that kind of leadership.¹

The kind of leadership provided by Eisenhardt seemed to be just what was needed during the mid-Depression years. He was educated, handsome, charming, and cosmopolitan. He was a prolific writer, and an impressive public speaker. He saw Pro-Rec as an idealistically-inspired movement that could change society and people's lives for the better, and he was able to articulate his goals and ideals when addressing influential groups or the public at large; in short, he possessed charisma. At a time when Canadians needed and wanted to be told that something in their lives held the potential for great benefits, Eisenhardt gave them the right message.

¹Young, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

Eisenhardt was a good administrator, according to Hilda Keatley, who worked for him from 1936 to 1941. He was organized, he worked very hard, and he delegated tasks and authority well.¹ But he was also impractical and naive at times, and could become bored with something once it was well-started.² Not popular with everyone, Eisenhardt did, apparently, "step on some toes" during his tenure. He antagonized Vancouver School Board personnel from time to time,³ and created a less-than-happy atmosphere with the Vancouver Park Board when he left to start the Pro-Rec programme.⁴

Keatley also said that, for the job that needed to be done at that time, no one could have been better than Eisenhardt.⁵ His style of leadership was independent and aggressive, as demonstrated when he bypassed the Vancouver advisory committee in the first month of the programme.⁶ He was an innovator, not a committee man; the constraints of civil service bureaucracy were not to his liking,⁷ and he was fortunate to be able to work for a minister like Weir, who did not insist that he adhere to procedures and regulations.

Eisenhardt was also an ambitious man, and this characteristic

¹Interview with Hilda Keatley, May 23rd, 1977.

²Interview with Hilda Keatley, February 21st, 1976.

³Interview with Gordon Brandreth, May 24th, 1977.

⁴Interview with Marjorie Milne, May 9th, 1977.

⁵Interview with Hilda Keatley, May 23rd, 1977.

⁶*Supra*, p. 76.

⁷This was demonstrated in his positions with the National Physical Fitness Council and the Department of Indian Affairs. Interview with Ian Eisenhardt, December 12th, 1976.

was revealed many times, not only in Pro-Rec, but by virtue of the many positions that he held. He was not content to stay at the local level with the Vancouver parks, but in succession, applied for and was appointed to recreation posts at increasingly higher levels of government. He started with municipal playgrounds, moved to the provincial recreation scheme, then to recreation for the armed services, next to the position of National Physical Fitness Director, and finally to the United Nations Headquarters in New York.¹ Other manifestations of his ambitions both for Pro-Rec and for himself, included an early proposal to incorporate, within Pro-Rec, all physical education and recreation agencies in the province, including school programmes and the training of physical education teachers at universities and normal schools. This proposal was presented to Weir in 1936, and was far-reaching in its implications. It recommended that, in each municipality, both public recreation and school health and physical education be supervised by one executive officer.² Eisenhardt was also of the opinion that Pro-Rec instructors should be given opportunities to teach in the schools,³ and that he, himself, should be given a teacher's certificate, to make his task of consulting with school officials easier.⁴ He also asked to be placed in charge of all physical education in British Columbia, in the schools, at the University, and in the Department of Education.⁵ And in

¹*Ibid.*

²"Comprehensive Report", 1935-36, pp. 49-50.

³"Comprehensive Report", 1936-37, p. 35.

⁴Letter to George Weir, Minister of Education, Victoria, from Ian Eisenhardt, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, October 7, 1936 [PABC: 8.9.4 - 8.9.5 g].

⁵*Ibid.*

1936, he proposed that the summer school course for Pro-Rec instructors become the "foundation for a 'Normal School of physical education'".¹ Only his proposal to combine public recreation with school health and physical education was ever implemented, and this not until Lee's term in 1946. Some Pro-Rec instructors were eventually given teaching certificates, but very much too late; when Pro-Rec disbanded in 1953, two senior instructors were given positions with school boards and were granted certificates at that time.²

Eisenhardt was a very strong proponent of a national version of Pro-Rec, and Sawula stated that Eisenhardt's influence on the eventual passage of the *National Physical Fitness Act* was due, in part, to "his constant attempts to sell physical fitness for healthy living to the provincial and federal governments."³ As early as December, 1934, Eisenhardt had "already voiced his intentions of making the [Pro-Rec] movement Dominion-wide",⁴ and in 1936 he first proposed the concept of a cross-Canada tour, to show Pro-Rec to the nation.⁵ These national plans initially bore fruit in 1937 when the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Programme included physical fitness among its financial projects,⁶ and were further advanced two years later with the passage of the *Youth Training Act*.⁷ In the meantime, Eisenhardt attempted to have

¹*Daily Province*, July 25th, 1936, p. 26.

²*Vancouver Sun*, May 7th, 1953, p. 23.

³Sawula, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31.

⁴*Vancouver Sun*, December 17th, 1934, p. 6.

⁵Letter to George Weir, Minister of Education, Victoria, from Ian Eisenhardt, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, February 24th, 1937 [PABC: 8.9.4 - 8.9.5 g].

⁶*Supra*, pp. 173-175.

⁷*Supra*, pp. 175-176.

the Pro-Rec Summer School textbook accepted on a trans-provincial basis,¹ and in an article in *The Gymnast* of January, 1938, stated that, in view of the federal government's interest in Pro-Rec:

. . . it is only a question of time before this pioneer recreational work is extended to all the other Provinces of Canada and that its ultimate form will retain all the best features of the present British Columbia plan.²

With the outbreak of war, Eisenhardt began to press federal authorities to adopt a national physical fitness plan. In December, 1939, he published a proposal for a "National Keep Fit Campaign", based on the structure then in existence under the Youth Training Programme.³ In that same month, as retiring President of the B.C. Branch of the Canadian Physical Education Association, Eisenhardt urged members to work toward a national fitness programme.⁴ In February, 1940, he submitted, to the federal Minister of Labour, his "Canadian National Fitness Campaign" concept, and included therein a proposal for a National Training College for instructors, to implement the proposal.⁵ In 1943, the *National Physical Fitness Act* was passed, and the next year, Eisenhardt became the first National Director of Physical Fitness.

Eisenhardt's tenure as Pro-Rec Director was not entirely without

¹Letter to R.F. Thompson, Supervisor of Youth Training, Ottawa, from Ian Eisenhardt, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, November 2nd, 1939 [PAC: RG 27/698/Y12-1-8].

²*Gymnast*, IV:1 (January, 1938), p. 4.

³Canadian Physical Education Association, *Bulletin*, VII:3 (December, 1939), pp. 1-2.

⁴Ian Eisenhardt, President's address to B.C. Branch of C.P.E.A., Vancouver, December 20th, 1939, p. 2 (Eisenhardt Collection).

⁵Letter to Norman McLarty, Minister of Labour, Ottawa, from Ian Eisenhardt, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver [PAC: RG 27/698/Y12-1-8/Sec. 7].

difficulties. He encountered opposition from a number of groups and individuals, and references have been made in previous sections to some of this opposition. One personal problem which plagued Eisenhardt for many years was that of racial prejudice against him. It is impossible to determine the actual effect of this, but it did produce a great deal of publicity and, in the social climate of the period, was probably perceived by some as a reflection against both Eisenhardt and Pro-Rec.

In the aftermath of World War II, when the world became fully aware of the atrocities committed by Nazi Germany, racialism was discredited, and the attitudes of Canadians toward immigrants became more positive and accepting. But during the 1930's, racial prejudice was a characteristic of British Columbia society,¹ and Vancouver's history includes a number of unfortunate instances of blatant racial discrimination.²

Eisenhardt, a Dane with a German name, first experienced this discrimination in 1932, when his appointment as Playground Supervisor was protested by the Native Sons of British Columbia because he was foreign-born.³ Then, in 1935, even though by that time Eisenhardt was a Canadian,⁴ the Vancouver Park Board received a delegation from five organizations protesting his appointment as Pro-Rec Director. The spokesman for those groups stated that preference for the position should have been given to a local person when so many were out of work, and

¹Norris, *op. cit.*, pp. 49, 51.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 214, 224-227, 232.

³Minutes of Vancouver Park Board meeting, May 26th, 1932 [VCA: RG 7, Series A1, Volume 8].

⁴Interview with Ian Eisenhardt, December 12th, 1976.

they objected to a foreigner teaching Canadian children how to be good Canadians.¹ The issue was to have been investigated by the Park Board, but three weeks later, Eisenhardt resigned to become a full-time employee of the provincial Department of Education; all statements made by the protesting groups were retracted, and the matter was dropped.² Nevertheless, much adverse publicity was generated by this incident.

With the outbreak of the War, Eisenhardt came under attack because of his German name. In November, 1939, he had occasion to address a Board of Trade meeting in Vancouver about the relationship of physical fitness to general health; he also stressed the need for improved physical fitness among Canadians so that they could live more productive lives and make a better contribution to the war effort. This address was reported briefly in a newspaper article under the headline "Live for Canada",³ and prompted an angry reader to write that Eisenhardt should be taken to task for advocating that it was better to "live for Canada" than to "die for Hitler"; this letter also made reference to Eisenhardt's German name, and questioned his loyalty to Canada.⁴ A columnist gave Eisenhardt the opportunity to make a complete rebuttal of these petty charges, and to clarify his speech, from which phrases had been taken out of context.⁵

¹*News-Herald*, May 24th, 1935, p. 2.

²Minutes of the meeting of the Vancouver Board of Park Commissioners, June 13th, 1935, minute no. 2354 [VCA: RG 7, Series A1, Volume 9].

³*Daily Province*, November 11th, 1939, p. 19.

⁴*Vancouver Sun*, December 2nd, 1939, p. 4.

⁵*Ibid.*

The most serious instance of inflammatory statements made against Eisenhardt involved J.A. Paton, Member of the Provincial Legislative Assembly for Vancouver Point Grey. In a speech to the British Canadian Allies' Club in June, 1940, Paton called for the dissolution of Pro-Rec because it was keeping potential servicemen in positions as instructors. He also stated that it was "time the whole department was Canadianized";¹ reading a list of executive staff and instructors who were of foreign extration, he challenged the Provincial Government to find three or four people of British or Canadian birth who could carry on this work, if indeed it was necessary to maintain the programme. He also stated that Eisenhardt was "born on the border between Denmark and Germany".² In the same newspaper issue, Eisenhardt produced a rebuttal of Paton's remarks, stating that federal and provincial governments felt that Pro-Rec was worthwhile, that Britain had just two weeks before launched a "Fitness for Service" programme to make that nation's citizens more fit for the war effort, that many Pro-Rec instructors had already joined the Canadian armed services, and that he, Eisenhardt, had been born in the north of Denmark and had become a naturalized Canadian in 1933.³

The battle of words between Eisenhardt and Paton continued to be fought in the newspapers for the next two weeks. Charges and counter-charges, editorials and letters to the editor were published, and Paton became more vindictive with each statement. Eisenhardt had warned Paton not to make him, Eisenhardt, out to be a Nazi, and Paton's answer to that, in a letter to the editor, was:

¹*News-Herald*, July 6th, 1940, p. 32.

²*Ibid.*, p. 31.

³*Ibid.*

There is nothing I can do to make him a Nazi. His name, if referred to in any German dictionary, shows him to be of Prussian origin.

The word "Eisen" means "iron; sword or weapon, etc. While the word "hart" means "harsh; hard; rough; severe; cruel," and many other similar meanings.

The fact that Mr. Eisenhardt was born in Denmark is something over which he had no control, it is certainly not the last word in racial entity with its accompanying characteristics.¹

The next day, in another letter to the editor, Paton continued his rationalization of his claim that Pro-Rec be disbanded because it was in the hands of those who had not yet absorbed the Canadian idea, and he drew attention to the fact that the youth hostelling system established by Pro-Rec "was the same system used by Germany for penetrating France by a group of potential officers . . . with telling results."² Meanwhile, newspaper editorials and other letters to the editor were printed, giving strong support to Eisenhardt and Pro-Rec, and stating that Paton's remarks were ill-advised, unfair, and unfortunate.³ But Paton persisted and, in a final letter, referred to immigrants who did not assimilate easily, criticized the government for appointing someone of "foreign extraction" instead of someone who "understands the traditions of the country", and finished by telling of coercive methods used by the enemy through the internment of relatives of nationals living abroad, and stating that "there is no reason to believe that this same coercion may not be applied in the case at point."⁴

The entire issue was very unfortunate, and reflected not only the hysteria of the early war years but also the racial bigotry of many

¹News-Herald, July 8th, 1940, p. 6.

²News-Herald, July 9th, 1940, p. 6.

³News-Herald, July 8th, p. 6; July 11th, p. 6; July 13th, 1940, p. 10.

⁴News-Herald, July 13th, 1940, p. 10.

Canadians at that time. Paton's statements implied that Eisenhardt was, at best, a foreign-born resident who could be blackmailed, by the German occupation of Denmark, into leading young Canadians along paths contrary to Canadian principles of democracy. That Paton, an M.L.A., could make these statements in the newspaper was an indication of the support that some Canadians gave to such attitudes. It is difficult to judge the effects of this episode, but it is likely that some damage was done to the public images of both Pro-Rec and Eisenhardt.

George M. Weir

In his role as Minister of Education, Weir brought more to this office than most politicians. His reputation as an educational reformer was earned from his co-authorship of the Putnam and Weir Report, *Survey of the School System*,¹ and his prestige had been further enhanced through his position as head of the Department of Education at the University of B.C. As a result, he was perceived as being more than a party politician.²

Weir's personal belief in the importance and value of physical education prompted his support of Pro-Rec. He also proposed, in the late '30's, a health insurance scheme for British Columbia,³ and a health programme for Canada.⁴

There is no question that Weir's sponsorship of Pro-Rec was vital during the first few years of the programme's development. It is

¹*Supra*, pp. 54-56.

²Soward, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

³Ormsby, *op. cit.*, pp. 456-457.

⁴George M. Weir, "National Health Program", *Maclean's Magazine*, LIII:12 (March 15th, 1939), pp. 54-56.

probable that his power within the provincial cabinet resulted in the substantial increases in funding during the 1930's. Also, Eisenhardt's plan would not have reached the government level in the first place, and could easily have foundered after a year or two, without Weir's support.

Jerry Mathisen and Hilda Keatley

In his capacity as Provincial Supervisor for men, Jerry Mathisen exerted a very strong influence on the men's programme. He held this position throughout the entire span of Pro-Rec's existence, and it was because of him that the gymnastics programme for men placed so much emphasis on striving to attain a high standard of performance. Pro-Rec was noted for this, and Mathisen was its chief inspiration. In this sense, he was the cause of both the praise and the blame that befell the men's programme from time to time. Criticism of the gymnastics emphasis, and of the general European atmosphere of the programme, was usually directed against the men's classes, and yet, at the same time, it was the impressive routines and the outstanding achievements of Pro-Rec members in the performance of difficult skills that gave Pro-Rec its reputation as a wellspring of gymnasts of British Columbia. Whether this emphasis was good or bad depended upon the viewpoint of the observer, but irrespective of that evaluation, Mathisen was highly-regarded by almost everyone who had contact with him; his abilities as a teacher, a performer, and an organizer were respectfully acknowledged, and his influence on the shape and direction of the Pro-Rec programme was significant.

Hilda Keatley exerted the same kind of influence on the women's programme as Mathisen did with the men's. The women's classes were also

heavily oriented toward gymnastics, but of the "Keep Fit" kind, and the demonstration performances were of massed exercises rather than of individual stunts and vaults. The skill level was lower than that achieved by the men, but only because the objectives of the two programmes differed in execution standards. The women's classes were not subject to the same criticism as the men's classes, because the content of the women's classes was not questioned by observers; Keep Fit activities were considered to be very suitable for women at that time, and these activities did not carry with them any suggestions of foreign influences. This women's programme was the product of Keatley's efforts, from beginning to end. She developed the activities for the season, planned the accompanists' music, trained the instructors, developed the programme for the final display, and supervised the classes. Although she restricted her activities to Vancouver for the most part, her plans permeated throughout the province, and she did exert some influence in other locales.

Because of the structure of Pro-Rec's administration, it is no exaggeration to say that, for most of its history, the programme in the centres was primarily the product of two people. And it was to Pro-Rec's disadvantage that these two extremely influential people did not work well together.

The schism between Mathisen and Keatley has already received some treatment.¹ It probably did not become open antagonism until after Eisenhardt left for the army in 1941. At that time, Mathisen, Keatley, and Paul King formed the Executive Board to administer the programme in

¹*Supra*, pp. 204-206.

Eisenhardt's absence, and when King left in 1942, Mathisen and Keatley continued as the Board until Mathisen's appointment as Director in 1944. From a distance of thirty years, and in view of the natural reluctance of observers to give details of the clash between these two senior staff members, it does appear that this was a case of two very strong personalities, each having protective feelings about the programmes that they saw as their own, and refusing to co-operate with one another sufficiently to eliminate the friction.

A strong Director might have either prevented the friction from reaching the stage of open antagonism, or reduced it enough to allow both individuals to work more co-operatively with one another. During Eisenhardt's tenure as Director, all seemed well, either because the split had not yet developed or because Eisenhardt's leadership prevented such a problem from arising. When Mathisen and Keatley were left on their own, they began to separate their programmes, and when Lee arrived in 1946, the damage had been done. Still, Lee could have minimized the antagonism, if he had assumed a more forceful role in this conflict. This he was unable to do,¹ and when he left, Mathisen and Keatley were no closer together. Lee had had three choices: to dismiss one or both of the chief instructors; to insist upon a reconciliation or a truce, with the establishment of some harmony; or to leave matters as they were and hope that they would improve. That Lee did not choose dismissal is understandable; both Mathisen and Keatley were too solidly entrenched, too highly respected by their instructors, and too competent in their own areas. It is unfortunate that he was not able to affect a

¹Interviews with Ernest Lee, June 28th, 1976 and R.J. Phillips, May 19th, 1977.

reconciliation, because matters did not improve and the divisiveness that had existed in the Branch was not removed.

The effects of this schism are hard to evaluate, because it becomes necessary to speculate on the form and direction that Pro-Rec would have taken if that situation had not developed. Certainly, a unified agency would have been able to react more readily to criticism, and to changing conditions in society. It is probable, too, that both Mathisen and Keatley tended to perpetuate their programmes as much from a felt need to protect their established territory as from a belief in the intrinsic worth of the activities in these programmes. Much of the inflexibility for which Pro-Rec would be criticized at the end arose, no doubt, from this long-standing schism between these two senior staff members.

Ernest Lee

Lee's tenure as Director of Pro-Rec was very short; he was appointed in April, 1946, and then left for Ottawa in October, 1949. During that time, he made considerable progress in the area of improved liaison and co-operation with the school programmes, and probably reduced some of the tension that had existed between Pro-Rec and the Vancouver School Board. He also increased the scope of the Branch in the promotion of community recreation councils.

However, it may be questioned that he made any significant contribution toward the original, more traditional programme of Pro-Rec centres. In fact, he may have had a negative affect on that particular part of the Branch's responsibilities. An examination of the fluctuations in registrations and numbers of centres¹ reveals that during Lee's

¹See Appendix D.

directorship, from 1946 to 1949, both of these factors decreased in number, and then increased after he left Pro-Rec. The only other period of significant decrease was during the early years of the War (1939 to 1942). The causes of the decreases during Lee's time are not clearly understood. It is known that part of the reduction in centres during 1946-47 was attributed to the addition of Lee's salary and expenses to the existing Pro-Rec budget.¹ Also, by his own admission, Lee was trying to change the direction of Pro-Rec, through more community involvement and greater diversification of programme offerings. In his opinion, the provincial education authorities viewed the old Pro-Rec programme as a problem for which there seemed to be no solution, and he felt that its days were numbered.² These perceptions of the programme affected his attitude toward Pro-Rec, and he does not appear to have tackled fundamental problems such as the administrative split between men and women, or the centralization and rigidity of the programme. Instead, he concentrated his efforts on new activities that were more closely related to his own experience and interests, and to the changing needs of society.

Lee's methods were undoubtedly the correct ones, to those individuals who wanted fundamental changes in Pro-Rec, but these fundamental changes did not materialize, either because Lee did not stay long enough, or because he was not able to effect significant change. To others who wanted an improvement of the existing programme, Lee's tenure was not a helpful one, and appears to have marked the beginning of the end, for

¹Letter to Ian Eisenhardt, National Physical Fitness Director, Ottawa, from Jerry Mathisen, Pro-Rec Provincial Supervisor for Men, Vancouver, August 26th, 1946 [PAC: RG 29/826/214-1-9/Part 1].

²Interview with Ernest Lee, June 28th, 1976.

after he left the Department of Education did not officially appoint a new Director; instead, they assigned the acting directorship to Phillips, and told him to maintain the status quo. Lee was highly regarded as an educator, as a trainer of future teachers, and as a provincial supervisor of physical education, but as a Director of Pro-Rec, his contribution was mixed; he introduced high school athletics championships and he encouraged the growth of community recreation councils, but he did not advance the basic programme of Pro-Rec centres in any significant way.

R.J. "Bus" Phillips

By the time "Bus" Phillips was appointed Acting Director in 1949, he had worked in Pro-Rec as a leader, an instructor, the Registrar, and the Chief Clerk or office manager. He was well-known and well-liked, with leadership traits different from those exhibited by Eisenhardt, Mathisen, or Lee. Phillips was quietly competent, unassuming, and very easy to work with, and when he was given the responsibilities of the Director, he was told that changes were coming and that it was his duty to keep Pro-Rec operating as smoothly as possible.¹ This he appears to have accomplished with a minimum of disruption. He was also told by Fairey, Deputy Minister of Education, to minimize the effects of the Mathisen-Keatley split,² and he did make progress in this important area.³ He accomplished this by keeping them separated as much as possible and by allowing them to bring their concerns directly to him.⁴

¹Interview with R.J. Phillips, May 19th, 1977.

²Interview with R.J. Phillips, May 19th, 1977.

³R.J. Phillips, Comments to F.T. Fairey, Deputy Minister of Education (typed), November, 1952 (Phillips Collection), p. 3.

⁴Interview with R.J. Phillips, May 19th, 1977.

His new responsibilities demanded that he become an overnight expert on community recreation because he was required to make speeches to community groups in his capacity as Pro-Rec Director.¹ This new involvement brought him into contact with other ideas about public recreation and led to his later conclusion that "government operation of Pro-Rec centres [was] contrary to the philosophy of recreation",² but he also felt that to eliminate Pro-Rec suddenly and completely would be disastrous and would meet with public disapproval.³

Phillips' tenure was productive, for the programme grew in a number of different directions; registrations and numbers of centres increased, community recreation councils continued to evolve; and sponsorships of school championships were solidly established. There were no significant changes in the nature of Pro-Rec centres, however. The programme was essentially the same as when Lee had resigned, and Phillips was simply carrying out the directive of his superiors — to keep things going until real changes could be made.

Effects of Intervals Without a Director

For two major intervals, from 1941 to 1944, and from 1949 to 1953, Pro-Rec did not have a Director. In the former period, Eisenhardt was nominally the Director but was on leave to the Army, and did not function as an administrative head. In the latter period, Phillips was Acting Director, but was not given full recognition as head, although he did in effect, assume most of the responsibilities. Therefore, for nine

¹*Ibid.*

²Phillips, Comments, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

³*Ibid.*

of its nineteen seasons, or for approximately forty-seven per cent of its time in existence, Pro-Rec was without recognized leadership. During that time, there was no one person acknowledged by either the Provincial Government or the community at large as the leader in provincial recreation. This weakness was further compounded by the short tenure of those two men who did serve as Director in the time between the two Director-less periods. Mathisen held the position for only two seasons, and Lee for only three. Neither of these were there long enough to produce lasting changes in the basic programme that might have altered its direction and thus its future. Long-range planning was not a feature of the administration of Pro-Rec, and this was a fundamental weakness in the entire structure. The only long-term plans proposed at any time were those submitted by Mathisen, and these were designed to aid the development of semi-autonomous community recreation councils, not to change the basic Pro-Rec programme of government-operated recreation centres. It is fair to assume that the lack of a Director at all times was a major problem for Pro-Rec, and the cause of inherent weakness. That the Department of Education did not see fit to fill the vacated position in 1941 and 1949 suggests that it did not attach sufficient importance to its Recreational and Physical Education Branch.

DRAWBACKS OF PRO-REC

The Pro-Rec programme was ended in 1953 because certain powerful groups were opposed to its continuation. This opposition was of two general kinds: that which claimed that Pro-Rec had outlived its original purpose and should therefore be discontinued; and that which contended that, irrespective of its purposes and objectives, Pro-Rec had certain

negative features that warranted its termination. It is to this latter kind of opposition that the present section is directed.

Administration and Programming

Centralization. In an earlier section of this chapter, the unique centralization of Pro-Rec administration was described; this was seen by many outsiders as one of the greatest deterrents to improvement of the programme. Osborne stated, in a 1956 review of recreation programmes in British Columbia, that:

The weakness of Pro-Rec lay in the provincial supervision not only of programme but of responsibility; and the deficiency became more apparent during the post-war years.¹

The drawbacks of such a system, in a province as large as British Columbia, were serious. The instructors were answerable more to head office than to the communities they served, and the programme that was presented often emanated from head office, regardless of the needs and interests of the local group. For example, in the Vancouver Island village of Cumberland, the following situation developed in the post-war period:

In one year the town had three [Pro-Rec] leaders The fundamental problem with these three leaders seemed to be that they tried to force activities on the community.

One leader was only interested in basketball and for a short time ran a large group of basketball enthusiasts. . . . but the community as a whole did not want to participate in basketball. The next leader specialized in boxing. This is an excellent sport but only a very few people are interested in actively participating. The last leader to go to the community was a gymnastic specialist; he was an excellent gymnastic instructor but as a recreation leader he was very poor.²

¹R.F. Osborne, "Leadership in Recreation in British Columbia," p. 18.

²Nixon, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30.

Centralization had many advantages, but as local communities developed their own needs, and as society moved further away from the problems of the Depression and the demands of wartime, a programme tightly-controlled from a provincial head office made less sense to the populace than one which allowed for local variations.

Inflexibility. Closely related to centralization was the lack of flexibility in the programme and the structure of the Branch. In spite of statements that implied change to keep up with the times, the basic programme did not alter significantly in the nineteen years it was offered. An instructor taking as much as fifteen years leave could return and find essentially the same programme, facilities, type of equipment, form of final displays, senior instructors, purposes, content and form of summer school, administrative organization, qualifications and source of instructors, and many other similar kinds of features. The Branch expanded its breadth of services to the public through community councils and school championships, but it did not change the original formula for the Pro-Rec centres themselves.

This is not surprising, given the attitudes of the senior instructors toward their own programmes, but this lack of substantial change suggests an inability to adapt, where adaptation would have been the obvious answer to criticism. For example, repeated claims that the programme placed too much emphasis on gymnastics ought to have produced, after some years, a modification in the programme, but no such change was ever made. Instead, the criticism was countered in one of two ways — either the charge was denied, or the emphasis was justified on the grounds that gymnastics was a valuable activity. There does not appear to have been any serious examination of criticisms, nor any mechanism

for internal evaluation of the programme in terms of its objectives. Outward measures of success, such as numbers of members, were taken as indications that all was well, and the programme did not adapt to changing needs and conditions in society. By contrast, the Alberta programme, which had been inspired by Pro-Rec, adapted continuously and remained strong and viable; by 1953, when Pro-Rec was ended, the Alberta Health and Recreation Branch had evolved into a recreation leadership agency working closely with sports groups, and it became even stronger with subsequent changes in its structure and programme.¹

Restricted Nature of Activities. After its initial period of success in the 1930's, Pro-Rec became the object of criticism from outside groups and individuals because of the restricted nature of the activities presented at centres. Specifically, it was the stress on gymnastics that generated most of the adverse comment and this started as early as 1936-37.² Lee stated that, as time went on, the gymnastics programme for men developed to the stage where the gymnasts became almost like circus performers, and that this discouraged the average citizen, who felt that he could not perform at their level.³

In 1946, the report of the Canadian Youth Commission, *Youth and Recreation*, while praising Pro-Rec for many of its achievements, was highly critical of the narrow programme offerings:

The chief weakness of the programme . . . is its somewhat limited philosophy. It has been framed largely in terms of physical education, and according to some physical educators, is very limited in its outlook even in this

¹Baka, *op. cit.*, pp. 229-234.

²*Public Schools Report*, 1936-37, p. 79.

³Interview with Ernest Lee, June 28th, 1976.

field, since it has emphasized classes, drills, calisthenics, gymnastics, without providing an adequate balance in terms of out-of-door sports For this reason, some critics have even condemned it as "old-fashioned" or "European" in character.

Physical education may be a desirable starting point for a recreation programme, because it corresponds to current interests and desires. But no recreation programme can be successful if it limits itself to these activities alone for an indefinite period.¹

The authors of this report felt that a good foundation had been laid, but hoped that the emphasis would shift to social, cultural, and educational activities, thus producing a broad programme of recreation. They cited, as an encouraging sign, the new Saskatchewan Recreation Movement.²

As with other entrenched features of Pro-Rec, concern about a narrow programme did not produce an improvement in the situation. There are a number of possible reasons for this: a firm belief in the rightness of the content; an attitude of paternalism that was part of the legacy of the Depression; fear on the part of senior staff that they would be venturing away from a safe and proven programme; inability of staff or instructors to present different activities; or lack of understanding of the changes taking place in society with respect to recreation. The real problem was more than just one of these reasons, however; it was related to the situation that would allow any one of these reasons to prevail and to affect the scope of the programme. The problem was that Pro-Rec was not accountable to any group or individual except the Minister of Education. The absence of a policy-making body, with power to effect change, meant that criticisms could be ignored, or go unheard. Lacking the machinery for self-evaluation, Pro-Rec tended to

¹Canadian Youth Commission, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

²*Ibid.*, p. 84.

perpetuate an existing poor situation, and the problem of narrowness was never seriously addressed.

Relationships with Other Groups

Vancouver School Board. Over its nineteen years in operation, Pro-Rec never succeeded in establishing amicable relations with the Vancouver School Board, the most influential school district in the province.¹ Without the support of this school board, Pro-Rec could not hope to be fully accepted as a legitimate educational enterprise, and limited school co-operation was always given very grudgingly.

The first indication that the Vancouver School Board's support would be qualified came in November, 1934, when a meeting of the trustees agreed that Pro-Rec would be allowed to register members for centres in schools but only if the regular rental fees were paid, if the school janitor was present and in charge of facilities, if ball games were prohibited in auditoriums, and if the Board was freed from liability.² Then, in December, Eisenhardt succeeded in circumventing the joint parks-schools advisory committee established to work with Pro-Rec in Vancouver,³ and from that time on there was little else but ill-will between Pro-Rec and the Vancouver school authorities. Eisenhardt and Gordon Brandreth, Physical Education Supervisor for Vancouver, did not get on well together, and Brandreth's opinion was extremely important among physical education professionals in B.C. Complaints from the school authorities about damage to facilities were common, and

¹Interview with Gordon Brandreth, May 24th, 1977.

²Minutes of the meeting of the Vancouver Board of School Trustees, November 19th, 1934, p. 4168 [VCA: RG 8/Series A2/Volume 20].

³*Supra*, p. 76.

there was opposition to the storage of Pro-Rec equipment in some school gymnasias.¹ These complaints started in the 1930's and continued into the period after the War, when junior membership increased.² The Vancouver School Board was most vocal in its opposition to juniors participating in Pro-Rec classes. In Brandreth's opinion, the trouble stemmed from Pro-Rec's tendency to keep extending the programme beyond the centres, so as to justify its existence. Set up to meet certain objectives, it achieved these and then moved farther afield, and thus into the schools. This brought the Vancouver School Board into conflict with the Department of Education, and, in such a clash, Victoria had to win.³ Yet another cause of friction was the minor vandalism caused in some schools by junior members of Pro-Rec who vented their anti-school feelings on the school property when they were there in the evenings; without strict school supervision of these students, damage frequently occurred, and this gave the Vancouver School Board further reason to oppose Pro-Rec classes.⁴

It is evident that the cause of most of this contention was the junior programme. From the beginning, the Vancouver school officials did not want their school students participating in Pro-Rec classes, whether held in the schools or not.⁵ At first they were successful in keeping this to a minimum, but after the *National Physical Fitness Act*

¹Eisenhardt Personal Report, November 15th, 1935 (Eisenhardt Collection).

²Interview with Gordon Brandreth, May 24th, 1977.

³*Ibid.*

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵Letter to Ian Eisenhardt, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, from H.N. McCorkindale, Superintendent of Schools, Vancouver, November 3rd, 1936 [PABC: 8.9.4 - 8.9.5 g, Box 1-2b].

was passed in 1943, juniors were officially included, because the *Act* was intended to serve Canadians of all ages.¹ This precipitated a serious confrontation in 1945 between Pro-Rec and the Vancouver School Board, with the latter claiming that Pro-Rec was contributing to juvenile delinquency by holding junior classes after the supper hour.² Weir, as Minister of Education, intervened in this dispute and overruled the school board decision that no evening classes could be held.³ Although the debate ended there, the antagonism did not, and relations between the two opposing groups did not improve.

It is likely that the Vancouver School Board had always viewed Pro-Rec activities as an encroachment into its legitimate territory. Pro-Rec, like Nature, seemed to abhor a vacuum, and wherever there was a demonstrated need for physical recreation classes, Pro-Rec produced them. For many school children, Pro-Rec classes were the only opportunities for organized physical education, and in various parts of Vancouver, those classes did meet that demand.⁴ This was resented by many physical education teachers, who felt that their programmes should receive the government funds that were going to Pro-Rec. Another cause of resentment was the Vancouver School Board application of a very restrictive policy about the use of facilities after school hours. Groups using school gymnasias paid a rental fee, and this meant that

¹Letter to Jerry Mathisen, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, from Ian Eisenhardt, National Director of Physical Fitness, Ottawa, June 19th, 1945 [PAC: RG 29/829/214-1-9].

²Letter to Ian Eisenhardt, National Physical Fitness Director, Ottawa, from Jerry Mathisen, Pro-Rec Director, Vancouver, October 2nd, 1945 [PAC: RG 29/826/214-1-9/Part 1].

³Interview with Gordon Brandreth, May 24th, 1977

⁴Interview with Ernest Lee, June 28th, 1976.

school teachers could not come into their own gymnasias with their own groups — but outside organizations could.¹ Pro-Rec, as one of these outside agencies, provided programmes that were often more appealing to the school children than their own physical education classes were. Also, teachers claimed that Pro-Rec classes were using and abusing school equipment.² For these, and other described reasons, the friction that developed between Pro-Rec and school personnel continued to build over the years, and when Pro-Rec was challenged in 1953, the Vancouver School Board did not object.

Reference has been made to Brandreth's opposition to Pro-Rec, and this was evident even before the effects of the expanded junior programme had been felt. In a 1943 proposal for peace-time physical education and recreation in British Columbia, Brandreth outlined community and school needs in a post-war society, and proposed a provincial scheme markedly different from that conducted by Pro-Rec. In Brandreth's detailed plan, a provincial lay council on recreative physical training would oversee programmes presented by field secretaries or instructors possessing "recognized qualifications in physical training activities." The province would be divided into autonomous and self-supporting areas, with area councils responsible for promotion and co-ordination of activities presented by various organizations. In short, Brandreth's proposal advocated an entirely different kind of organization from that presented by Pro-Rec; it differed in philosophical foundations, in allocation of funds, in source and kind of leadership, and in the basic

¹Interview with Robert Osborne, May 10th, 1977.

²*Ibid.*

unit of activity organization.¹ It is not clear whether Brandreth proposed this scheme because he was opposed to Pro-Rec, or whether he opposed Pro-Rec because it operated contrary to principles he espoused; but it is certain that he advocated major changes in the provincial programme for post-school recreation.

Although Pro-Rec was the object of considerable criticism from the Vancouver School Board over the years, there is no evidence that all of the fault lay with Pro-Rec. The Vancouver School Board was never particularly co-operative with respect to the Pro-Rec programme, and often seemed to place obstacles in its path. This is unfortunate, because with more positive support from this important school board, Pro-Rec would have had less difficulty in obtaining facilities, could have been brought into the mainstream of the physical education profession, and may well have assumed a different form and function, in the long term.

Physical Education Professionals. The ill-will that developed between Pro-Rec and the Vancouver School Board might have been eliminated if Pro-Rec had had the support of the physical educators of British Columbia, but this was not the case. The chief criticism voiced by leaders of the physical education profession was the lack of proper educational background of the Pro-Rec instructors. Most instructors were not certified teachers, and their training was restricted to the Pro-Rec Summer School courses. Also, in many communities, they were actually teaching physical education for the school board, although

¹W. Gordon Brandreth, "Report on Expansion and Promotion of Physical Education and Recreational Activities in British Columbia", submitted to George M. Weir, Minister of Education, October 1st, 1943 [VCA: RG 8, Series D-3, Volume 19, File No. 25].

usually after school hours. This teaching practice was contrary to the professional aims of physical educators, who, by the late 1930's, were beginning to develop standards associated with American university degrees, and were at least attempting to improve the quality of physical education by certifying teachers who attended summer school courses organized through the provincial normal schools by the Department of Education.¹

This criticism caused a permanent and deep rift between Pro-Rec personnel and university and school teachers. Trained Pro-Rec instructors felt that they were always looked down upon, and that their backgrounds were held in low regard.² This was particularly galling to someone like Hilda Keatley, whose training at Dartford Physical Training College ranked with the best in the world, but was not recognized, in British Columbia at that time, as being of particular worth.³ There is no question, however, that the requirements for admission to the Pro-Rec Summer School were less than minimal, by University and Normal School standards, and that the courses given there were narrow in outlook, giving little or no knowledge about current theories in philosophy and content of physical education and recreation.

Eventually, as the physical education profession in British Columbia became more organized, and was able to raise its standards with the establishment of the Bachelor of Physical Education degree at the University of B.C.,⁴ Pro-Rec increasingly moved "beyond the pale" of

¹Interview with Gordon Brandreth, May 24th, 1977.

²Interview with Hilda Keatley, February 21st, 1976.

³*Ibid.*

⁴The first degree was granted in 1949.

physical education. Thus, when the Social Credit government decided to replace Pro-Rec with the new Community Programmes Branch, there was no opposition from the physical educators of B.C. Unlike their counterparts in Manitoba, who lobbied actively for the retention of that province's physical fitness programme,¹ the B.C. Branch of the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation welcomed Pro-Rec's replacement;² to this group of teachers, Pro-Rec was lacking a professional attitude, employed only one method of teaching and one concept of content, and was perceived to be detrimental to the growth of physical education and recreation in B.C. It had served its purpose, and its end was long overdue.

Other Organizations. One of the longest-lived criticism against Pro-Rec was its tendency to overlap with programmes offered by other agencies. One such agency, a critic and a rival of Pro-Rec from the beginning, was the Young Men's Christian Association.³ Both organizations based their programmes on gymnastics, and the Y.M.C.A. felt that Pro-Rec was using government funds to attract members who might otherwise have joined the "Y". Pro-Rec was free, and it appealed to young men who wanted to excel in gymnastics, whereas the "Y" charged a fee, and had a lower level of achievement because it also catered to businessmen. Lee was an active member of the Y.M.C.A. and tried to reduce the friction, but it was always there, and produced yet another important agency that was not sorry to see Pro-Rec terminated. Another organization which

¹Baka, *op. cit.*, pp. 339-341.

²Interview with H. Douglas Whittle, December 6th, 1978.

³Interview with Ernest Lee, June 28th, 1976.

resented Pro-Rec's programme was the Parent-Teachers Association of the Greater Vancouver area. The P.T.A. sponsored many Keep Fit classes for women and felt that the government was giving unfair advantage to the Pro-Rec classes in this area.¹

The general problem of overlapping, which could occur with a variety of agencies in different communities, seems to have been a serious cause for complaints from the beginning of Pro-Rec's existence. The criticism was repeatedly answered in general statements issued over the years: in annual reports of the Branch;² in official programmes for the Mass Displays;³ and in speeches by Eisenhardt.⁴ The Investigating Committee, which examined Pro-Rec in 1951, summed up this problem in a critical statement in its report:

There is considerable duplication on the part of the Provincial-Recreation services and those of other agencies such as night schools, parks boards, and community associations of various kinds. There are numerous examples of programmes being offered free of charge by this Branch and identical programmes being operated by other agencies on a self-sustaining basis involving the payment of fees by participants. On occasion, these parallel classes are held in the same building!⁵

Whether Pro-Rec could have eliminated this overlapping is difficult to determine. Given the free aspect of the classes, and the pressures to show worth of continued financial support by increases in membership, it is not difficult to understand how the overlapping developed. Because

¹Interview with Gordon Brandreth, May 24th, 1977.

²*Public Schools Report*, 1935-36, p. 117.

³"Mass Display Programme", 1945, p. 3.

⁴Ian Eisenhardt, "Why Recreation Centres", 1936 (Eisenhardt Collection).

⁵Report of the Investigating Committee, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

of its administrative structure, the Pro-Rec staff may have become isolated, and therefore unable to respond wisely to outside criticism. On the other hand, the suggestion that Pro-Rec had outlived its purpose may have been the most valid point, with other agencies able, after the War, to take over many of the services that Pro-Rec had been providing to the public.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF PRO-REC

In order to counteract the impression given by the detailed description of the negative aspects of Pro-Rec, it should be remembered that these features were of concern to only a minority of the population, although a very powerful minority. Most of the people associated with Pro-Rec felt that it was worthwhile, and they tended to support it rather than to criticize; it was only select groups such as politicians, professional physical educators, and leaders of competing agencies that mounted serious opposition to the programme. Even those who were critical of some features often spoke highly of other aspects of Pro-Rec. Lee admired it as a "people's movement", and said that its best contribution was during the Depression.¹ Fairey reported that it had made a laudable contribution to the health, happiness and welfare of low-income citizens;² and Van Vliet, Director of Physical Education at the University of British Columbia from 1936 to 1945, admired the Pro-Rec instructors' aggressive belief in their programme, and felt that Pro-Rec filled a real need at the time.³ Osborne stated that Pro-Rec's use of school buildings

¹Interview with Ernest Lee, June 28th, 1976.

²Fairey, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

³Interview with Maury Van Vliet, former Director of Physical Education at the University of B.C., Edmonton, Alberta, May 27th, 1976.

was innovative and ahead of its time; he also said that, through the Pro-Rec Summer School, the provincial government was producing some physical education instructors, and that most of them were good, even though their educational theory background was limited;¹ he believed that Pro-Rec was successful for most of its time, and only began to lose members in the last few years, when community centres started up.²

Pro-Rec's contributions were many and varied. They have been described in detail in earlier chapters and are briefly summarized here to demonstrate their breadth. The most important was the improvement of the general health and physical fitness of each of its members, who numbered in the thousands. Regular exercise produces important health benefits, and this most mundane consideration, often overlooked in the myriad of administrative details, remains by far the most important contribution made by Pro-Rec. Over 300,000 members registered with Pro-Rec between 1934 and 1953, and even though that number included hundreds of duplications, it was nevertheless an outstanding achievement.

As a model for other programmes, Pro-Rec was clearly inspirational. Its success served to encourage others in the establishment of schemes in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, and it also gave federal authorities a justification for financial support through the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Programme, and a pattern for the *National Physical Fitness Act*.

Although Pro-Rec was the subject of much criticism from physical educators in the metropolitan areas, and from the Vancouver School Board,

¹Interview with Robert Osborne, May 10th, 1977.

²*Ibid.*

it was appreciated in other parts of the province because it was the only form of physical education available, and the activities presented there were considered very good. Until after World War II, most rural schools in B.C. did not offer regular instruction in physical education, and Pro-Rec filled that void until gymnasias and qualified teachers became available. In addition, organized municipal playgrounds used Pro-Rec instructors during the summer months;¹ and special institutions such as the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, the provincial penal institutions, and the provincial mental hospital were able to develop recreation programmes through the use of Pro-Rec instructors, some of whom became permanent employees with those institutions.

In the area of high school athletics, the contribution of Pro-Rec under Lee and Phillips was extremely valuable. The staging of provincial championships by the Branch gave those sports the necessary organization that the schools were not able to provide. Many years after Pro-Rec was disbanded, the B.C. Federation of School Athletic Associations was organized and assumed responsibility for all provincial championships; but from 1953 until 1969, each sport was left to organize itself as best it could. The difficulties that these sports had during that time are indicative of the void left when Pro-Rec services were withdrawn, and it was sorely missed.² Only boys' basketball was well enough established to operate successful provincial championships after Pro-Rec ended, and this was largely due to the continued

¹*Daily Colonist*, August 2nd, 1936, p. 13.

²As an example, the revival of the provincial play-offs for girls' basketball, a very popular inter-school sport, was delayed until 1958, when the Women's Athletic Association of the University of B.C. assumed sponsorship of the defunct championship.

interest of "Bus" Phillips.

Another important contribution made by Pro-Rec to the schools was the holding of clinics for coaches and referees throughout the province for a variety of sports. Also, the positive assistance given to those communities in the development of recreation councils and centres was of value, as were the subsidy grants toward the salaries of community centre directors; this latter feature was the only one that Fairey wanted to retain in the new Community Programmes Branch formed in 1953.¹

Sport in British Columbia was also aided by Pro-Rec. Gymnastics was the greatest beneficiary, but cricket, archery, square dance, field hockey, softball, soccer, tennis, and track and field also gained in some way — either through direct assistance in the form of staff, programmes, or organized competition; or through the sponsorship by Pro-Rec of teams in local leagues.

The legacies of Pro-Rec are complex and therefore difficult to evaluate. Many of its members and leaders went on to careers as physical education teachers, and some of that interest was probably kindled by Pro-Rec classes. Another legacy was the number of thriving programmes in other provinces that were partially indebted to the inspirational model of Pro-Rec in the 1930's. Also, many former members continued their interest in physical fitness and Keep Fit programmes, and joined night school classes and community centres as a substitute for Pro-Rec.² And for some one hundred elderly ladies in Victoria, the memories of

¹Fairey, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

²Gymnastics classes are still called "Pro-Rec" by some residents of the Fraser Valley. (Interview with Thomas Ruben, May 25th, 1977).

Pro-Rec were strong enough to bring them to a reunion in 1976 and to try once again the exercise routines that they had practised during the '30's and the '40's.¹

Much of the criticism levelled against Pro-Rec over the years was legitimate and, by 1953, it probably had outlived its purpose and its time. Unfortunately, as with anything that is ended publicly by a decision based upon negative features, only those features were given prominence; the positive attributes were often forgotten. Pro-Rec's existence did not warrant this treatment; on balance, its strengths outweighed its weaknesses, and it deserves to be remembered as a very special movement that gave thousands of British Columbians unique opportunities for healthful physical recreation and enjoyable social activities.

¹*The Victorian*, July 2nd, 1976, p. 9.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the study was to write a comprehensive history of the provincial recreation programme (Pro-Rec) that operated in British Columbia from 1934 to 1953, and to examine its significance, its influence on other recreation schemes in Canada, and the reasons for its termination. The main problem, the history of Pro-Rec, was presented in three parts: an examination of the background conditions existing at the time of Pro-Rec's inception; a descriptive narrative of the programme, set forth in three time periods; and an interpretation of selected issues. The historical method was used, with data collected from: personal interviews; archival research; the study of available records, reports, and artifacts; government documents; personal collections of Pro-Rec materials; films; theses; newspaper reports; and published articles. An organized narrative was formed, based upon evaluation, analysis, and synthesis of the data. Interpretations were then made, and conclusions drawn.

SUMMARY

Pro-Rec was a public programme of physical recreation sponsored by the provincial government of British Columbia; no admission fees were charged, and the programme operated from November, 1934, to August, 1953. Instituted as the Recreational and Physical Education Branch of the

Department of Education, and intended to provide physical recreation for the unemployed, it quickly attracted thousands of men and women as members, and became available to all adults. During World War II, Pro-Rec modified its programme offerings to meet the needs of a wartime society, and after the War, expanded its scope to assist communities in the establishment of their own recreation schemes. Pro-Rec centres were located in all of the major population centres of the province, and in many rural areas.

The central feature of the programme was the free Pro-Rec centre, which members attended bi-weekly during the October-to-March season. The programme was based on Danish and Swedish gymnastics, supplemented by sports and dance activities. Annual Pro-Rec championships were organized in a wide range of sports. Members could participate in a number of other physical recreation activities, in addition to the regular programmes at centres. Facilities were rented by Pro-Rec, and equipment was provided for the activities. Full-time or part-time instructors for the classes were provided by Pro-Rec, and were trained at the annual Pro-Rec Summer School. At the end of each winter season, widespread publicity was generated by regional displays or demonstrations, the most important of which was the popular and spectacular Mass Display held in Vancouver.

Because of its well-publicized success and the enthusiasm of its leaders, Pro-Rec served as an inspiration for similar programmes in the three Prairie Provinces. At the federal level, it was a model for Dominion-Provincial physical fitness schemes of the Depression, and the *National Physical Fitness Act* of 1943.

The most important individuals in Pro-Rec during its formative

years were Ian Eisenhardt, the originator of the scheme and its first Director, and George Weir, the Minister of Education who provided the necessary political support for its establishment and continuance. Other influential leaders were Jerry Mathisen and Hilda Keatley, supervisors of the men's and women's programmes, respectively.

Pro-Rec centres and membership registrations fluctuated widely over the years. Initially, numbers rose to a peak in 1939, and then fell markedly during the early years of the War. A period of strong growth occurred late in the War, coinciding with the passage of the *National Physical Fitness Act* in 1943. In the late 1940's, another decline was seen, followed by a short, final period of slight growth. The allocation of funds showed some correspondence to this pattern, but only up to 1949; thereafter, funds and registrations increased while centres decreased in number.¹

Pro-Rec's nineteen years produced mixed reactions. It was acclaimed for its contributions to thousands of members, and for its extensive services that filled a void in physical recreation in British Columbia. It was also criticized for: its narrow approach to recreation in general and to physical recreation in particular; its highly-centralized structure; its dependence upon junior members; its use of non-professional instructors; and its expansion into areas judged to belong to other agencies. In 1953, voices were raised both in protest and in support of its termination.

¹Appendix M.

CONCLUSIONS

A number of hypotheses were formulated as bases for interpretation and conclusions of the study, and are discussed individually in this section.

1. That the Pro-Rec programme fulfilled an important need in the field of public recreation. This was attested to by the number of members who enrolled over the years. Pro-Rec was particularly important during the Depression, and was more important for women than for men. After World War II, the need for Pro-Rec centres was less apparent as other forms of physical recreation became available, and as enrollment of adults decreased; junior membership was more significant toward the end. Pro-Rec was largely successful in the specific field of physical recreation, and was not as important in other areas of public recreation. In some communities, Pro-Rec also fulfilled an important need in the physical education programmes of the schools, operating classes which would have otherwise not been available.

2. That Pro-Rec served as a model for the establishment of similar recreation programmes in the three Prairie Provinces. In Alberta and Saskatchewan, Pro-Rec did provide provincial authorities with an inspirational model. However, the most important contribution made by Pro-Rec was through the individuals who travelled to those provinces to assist with the establishment of their recreation schemes. Manitoba was only marginally influenced by the concepts developed in B.C.

3. That Pro-Rec was an important agency affecting the establishment of federal programmes of physical fitness and recreation. This hypothesis

was largely supported by the study. Pro-Rec served as an example of what could be achieved through a provincial programme, but the important British Columbia factor in the establishment of federal programmes was Ian Eisenhardt, the creator of Pro-Rec.

4. That the activities of the Pro-Rec Branch expanded beyond the original purpose and objectives of the scheme. This was unquestionably the case, and was manifest very early in Pro-Rec's existence. The first expansion was from unemployed men to employed men, and then to women. During World War II, Pro-Rec services also included classes for special groups associated with the war effort, as well as for people in institutions. After the War, the Branch expanded into community recreation and school physical education and athletics. Also, the membership was expanded, after 1943, to include juniors as well as adults. With the exception of war-oriented activities, Pro-Rec did not eliminate any programmes, but simply continued to add new ones to the existing offerings.

5. That the close association between Pro-Rec and physical fitness resulted in negative developments in the field of recreation in B.C. This hypothesis was only partly supported by the study. Although Pro-Rec used gymnastics and Keep Fit activities as the basis for its programmes at the centres, these were not used exclusively; the emphasis did not appear to have negative affects there because many other activities also flourished under Pro-Rec's sponsorship. In the broad area of community recreation, Pro-Rec may have delayed the establishment of community centres by trying to retain its centres and its own

instructors in communities where local autonomy was desired; but Pro-Rec was officially and publicly committed to the encouragement and support of local recreation councils from 1944 onwards. Furthermore, most municipalities in B.C. could not afford to build community centres until after the War and the subsequent period of national austerity; as soon as they could, communities did build these centres, with the support of the Branch. Pro-Rec probably did produce incorrect perceptions of the meaning of recreation in the minds of the average citizen; to the many thousands who attended Pro-Rec centres or who watched the Mass Displays, recreation was equated with Pro-Rec, and this would tend to give a narrow public view of the meaning of a recreation programme.

6. That Pro-Rec did more than undergo a name change in 1953; it actually ceased to exist, and was replaced by a new administrative unit.

This hypothesis was supported by the study. The significant characteristics of Pro-Rec, those features that made it different from any other physical recreation scheme, were eliminated in the new Community Programmes Branch, and Pro-Rec itself therefore ceased to exist — in name, in practice, and in spirit.

7. That the causes of Pro-Rec's termination can be traced to features inherent in its original organization. This hypothesis was supported

on two levels. The first was revealed through the features of administration, programming and leadership that produced weaknesses in and criticisms of the scheme. At another level, the major problem with Pro-Rec was not just any one of these weaknesses

or even all of them together. It was simply that at no time in Pro-Rec's nineteen years of operation was it organized according to a full set of clearly articulated objectives or desirable outcomes by which its progress and its effectiveness could be evaluated. The principles of operation by objectives were not applied. If, from its inception, Pro-Rec had been structured to meet a number of specific goals or outcomes, it could then have been subject to regular internal and external assessments. If this machinery had been well-structured, with a decision-making committee of representatives of the various groups affected by Pro-Rec, the programme would have been modified to better meet changing needs and interests, and many of the problems could have been forestalled.

Further Conclusions

From an examination of developments during the 1930's, it is concluded that the genesis of Pro-Rec can be traced to three sources. The first was the Winter Community Recreation programme of the Vancouver Park Board, upon which Eisenhardt expanded for his proposal to the provincial government. The second source was the Danish Folk High School concept, which influenced Eisenhardt's approach to adult physical recreation. The third was the progressive education philosophy of George Weir, which influenced his perceptions of physical education and health, and which enabled him to give the fullest possible support to a public physical recreation scheme.

It is also concluded that one of the chief causes of Pro-Rec's weakness was the absence of properly-developed legislation to govern its activities and to assess its programme. This resulted in the dissolution of the programme without a full debate in the Legislative

Assembly, a debate that would normally have occurred with the presentation of a bill to repeal or annul existing legislation. Given the public reaction to proposals to disband Pro-Rec, it is quite possible that a legislative debate would have produced different results from those which did occur in 1953.

The heavy reliance on the strengths of one individual, Ian Eisenhardt, in the early years of the programme, produced advantages as well as disadvantages. When he left Pro-Rec, a leadership vacuum was created, from which the programme never fully recovered. In much the same manner, the close association of Pro-Rec with the Liberal party of British Columbia meant that when that party was finally defeated, Pro-Rec no longer held a political base of support in the provincial government.

Finally, if lessons can be learned from an examination of the past, this examination of Pro-Rec has demonstrated that the leaders of recreation programmes cannot afford to operate independently of, and in isolation from, conditions influencing society as a whole. These leaders must remain attuned to the demands of, and the changes in, a dynamic society. Nor can they hope to succeed by attempting to retain a programme that was successful at a prior time, if the conditions of that prior time no longer prevail. Such leaders may learn from the past, but must provide a service that is best suited for the present and for the immediate future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Further Study

During the course of this investigation, it became apparent that further study should be conducted in a number of related areas.

1. The history of recreation in British Columbia is far from complete. An examination of all programmes presented by public and private agencies, at all levels of organization, is needed.
2. British Columbia has a long and illustrious history of sports achievement and development. This has not been investigated in any depth, with the exception of the pre-1885 era. A full treatment of the history of sport in this province would add an important chapter to the history of Canadian sport.
3. Although a history of physical education in British Columbia has been written for the period from 1918 to 1967, this could be investigated in greater depth, and expanded to include the years prior to 1918, and following 1967.
4. Comparable histories in recreation, sport, and physical education are also needed for the three Prairie Provinces.
5. Ian Eisenhardt made many significant contributions to a number of public recreation programmes in Canada, for which a full biographical study is warranted.
6. The 1930's spawned a number of programmes in Canada designed to offset the effects of the Depression, or to provide inexpensive forms of recreation. Such a programme was that offered by the workers' sports clubs of Winnipeg; also, the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Programme affected all provinces. This entire topic would prove interesting and worthwhile as an area for further study.

Final Recommendation

It is strongly recommended that the leaders of the recreation profession in Canada adequately recognize the important contributions of Ian Eisenhardt to the field of public recreation.

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 Radio broadcast, Station CRVC, Vancouver, January 29th, 1935.
 Address to Parent-Teachers Association, April 7th, 1935.
 Radio broadcast, December 11th, 1935.
 "Why Recreation Centres", 1936.
 "Education for Leisure", 1937.
 Address to Students at the Pro-Rec Summer School, August 12th, 1938.
 "Canada's Democratic Youth Movement", 1939.
 President's address to B.C. Branch of Canadian Physical Education Association, Vancouver, December 20th, 1939.

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Jamieson, Sheilagh. Archivist, The Glenbow Museum, Calgary, Alberta. Letter to the author, April 5th, 1979.

Keatley, Hilda. Personal collection of Pro-Rec materials: Scrapbook of clippings, tickets, programmes, publicity materials; 1940 Official Pro-Rec Summer School Textbook; centres' programmes; posters; photographs; Mass Display programmes; "Pro-Rec Bulletins"; various mimeographed and printed materials.

Phillips, R.J. Personal collection of Pro-Rec materials.

Ruben, Thomas. Personal collection of Pro-Rec materials.

Strachan, Florence, ed. *Field Hockey Jubilee Booklet*. Vancouver: Greater Vancouver Women's Grass Hockey Association, 1956.

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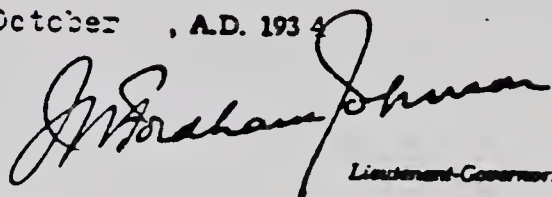
APPENDIX A

BRITISH COLUMBIA ORDER-IN-COUNCIL TO ESTABLISH PRO-REC

1345

Approved and ordered this 30th day of October, A.D. 1934

At the Executive Council Chamber, Victoria,



Lieutenant-Governor.

PRESENT:

The Honourable

in the Chair.

Mr. Pattullo
 Mr. Weir
 Mr. Hart
 Mr. Sloan
 Mr. MacPherson
 Mr. MacDonald
 Mr. Gray
 Mr.
 Mr.
 Mr.
 Mr.

To His Honour

The Lieutenant-Governor in Council:

The undersigned has the honour to report

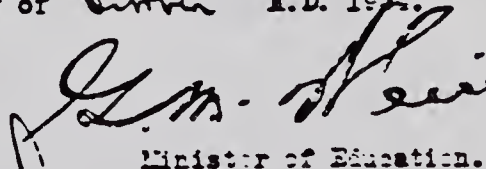
THAT on account of the large number of unemployed youths now in the Province who are exposed to the demoralizing influences of enforced idleness it is of urgent importance that some plan of recreational and physical education be undertaken immediately:

THAT for the above purpose the sum of twelve thousand five hundred (\$12,500.00) dollars is required:

AND THAT the Minister of Finance reports that there is no legislative authority for the expenditure which has been unforeseen and unprovided for by the Legislature, and that the money is urgently and immediately required for the public good:

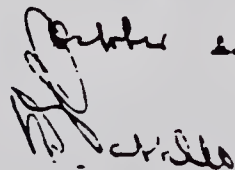
AND TO RECOMMEND THAT a Special Warrant in the sum of twelve thousand five hundred (\$12,500.00) dollars, to provide for the necessary expenditure, as aforesaid, be issued.

DATED this 30th day of October A.D. 1934.



Minister of Education.

APPROVED this 30th day of October A.D. 1934.



Presiding Member of the Executive Council.

APPENDIX B

LETTER TO VANCOUVER PARK BOARD FROM GEORGE M. WEIR,
MINISTER OF EDUCATION, n.d.

J. Fyfe-Smith, Esq.,
Chairman, Park Board
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Sir:

For some time I have planned to introduce courses for Recreational and Physical Education for young men and women over school age. As your Board is aware, the need of this is very great if these youths are to be saved from the physical and moral degeneration that is apt to ensue where leisure time is plentiful and there is no regular form of healthful exercises and recreational activities available to them wherewith to improve their physique and keep their minds clean. For this task we need an Organizer who is a Specialist in Physical Education and I would therefore request that your Board grant Mr. Ian Eisenhardt leave of absence up to the end of March, 1935, and permit the Department of Education to avail itself of his services. I would request, also, that your Board appoint three persons to act as members of an Advisory Committee to the Department of Education to assist in carrying out this project.

I need not assure your Board how greatly I would appreciate its support and co-operation in this programme which is being launched for the welfare of the youth of Vancouver and other large centres in the Province.

Yours very truly,

George M. Weir
Minister

Source: Minutes of the meeting of the Vancouver Park Board,
November 8th, 1934 [VCA: RG 7, Series A1, Volume 9.

APPENDIX C

LETTER TO GEORGE M. WEIR, MINISTER OF EDUCATION,
FROM IAN EISENHARDT, OCTOBER 19TH, 1934

Honourable Dr. G.M. Weir
Minister of Education
Houses of Parliament
Victoria, B.C.

Dear Sir:

What a pleasure it was to meet you the other morning and find you so interested in directed recreation for the schools and unemployed. This is a phase of social-public work that, because of our new country with its growth and activity, has been neglected, compared with what is being done in Denmark and Russia and Italy, Germany, Sweden, and lately in France.

You are quite right, with a little leadership this public can be made recreation-conscious, and we can turn street gangs into football squads and eliminate hundreds of street loafers. In the five major cities of British Columbia, and in fact all over the province, we can with government inspiration and direction, and at little, if any, additional expense, utilize our school plants for this so that they will completely occupy the time and thoughts of our youth.

Specifically, you ask me what can be done; my answer is: wonders.

You ask me how soon we can get action; my answer is: immediately.

With one or two broadcasts from yourself, as Minister of Education, to the School Boards throughout the province, I believe I could, under your authority and instructions, in 6 weeks have organized the five major cities of British Columbia, and carrying on extensive directed recreations.

This would be done in school plants and in park playgrounds in these various centres. Later the smaller towns, and then the districts, would be tackled along the same line.

It is simply a question of, first, the physical ideal; second, the inspiration from those in authority; third, the mechanics of carrying out that work; fourth and least important of all, the small amount of money that the government need spend on directing and organizing and seeing that the various Boards carry on.

If you have been watching the press you will have noticed from time to time that there is a public clamour for physical culture in the schools, as well as for adults. Our Rotary and Kiwanis and various clubs have been talking about them. Parents are hinting. Everybody

seems to have the general idea, but no one in authority in educational lines has come forward and sounded the note and theme for this fine work.

If you do not mind my making the observation, there have been demands from schools and other educational groups for more monies. But, suppose Vancouver were given another one or two hundred thousand dollars, or the University the same, is there any suggestion that there will be taken up by these groups the very thing that is deficient today in our recreation and occupational approach to combat the present unfortunate conditions?

People must be trained for these increased leisure hours, and I believe that the schools, in addition to the development of skill in classics and arts and crafts, can round out the possibilities of outdoor life in sports and in the most satisfying manner.

Again, what they are doing in other countries offers study, and I have closely observed, and I am certain, Dr. Weir, could be initiated and followed to tremendous advantage right here in British Columbia.

What they are doing in other countries, is playing up recreational programs for the use of leisure time, advising younger as well as older people how they may healthfully as well as pleasantly use, develop and discipline themselves.

The Board of Park Commissioners in Vancouver worked with great success five winter community recreation centres in various sections of the City. When the appropriation was cut, the recreation phase was eliminated.

You are right; we are spending money on hospitals, mental homes, penitentiaries, but we are not touching the vital thing,--physical culture-- with a wide organized recreation scheme.

First of all, gymnastic exercises must be introduced to the schools, and given by qualified instructors. Games are not enough. The public must be made recreation-and-health conscious.

Through gymnastics many children could be corrected for faults which at present are never checked, and which later in their lives make them easy prey for diseases.

It is essential for the health of children from 5 to 10 years of age to spend 4 hours daily in activities involving big muscles.

Children from the age of 10 to 12 to spend at least 3 hours in outdoor active play.

Children from 13 to 15, 2 hours in out-of-door activity. And the same goes for children 17 and 18 years old. And parents in many cases where they have never had recreation, because of time, because of their work in supporting a large family, etc., can now be organized, and they will gladly do so, if only given a lead. So far, nothing has been done.

As centres, I would, as a start, select the schools with best facilities, i.e., a large well-ventilated gymnasium, dressing rooms and showers, as well as small game room.

When school was over, gymnastic exercises would be given to the children, with sessions from at least 20 minutes, and games up to 40 minutes.

These sessions would run through from 4 P.M. until 9 and 10 P.M. ending up with the adults and unemployed youth.

Feature, too, the club movement and encouraging hikes and picnics over the week-end.

Two days per week for girls and women.

In the downtown districts some reading rooms could be secured at very small expense, where schools are not available, and you would be amazed at the results that would be secured with these various centres.

My plan would also take in physical training for boys in camps.

As to cost: A winter recreation centre established in a school gymnasium, operating 5, 6 or even 7 days a week from 3:30 P.M. right through to 10 P.M. with one instructor in charge, would cost from \$150 to \$200 per month, which would cover instructor's fees, sporting goods and incidentals. Say, \$200 per unit.

The average attendance would run 200 to 400 children and adults per day, and almost every family in the neighbourhood would have some benefit out of this centre per unit.

Classes in gymnastics, games, folk dancing, would be given. Once a month a social evening could be featured, and voluntary talent found to entertain.

From my observation and own experience, I know what can be done if leadership and inspiration is offered by yourself, and directly under and reporting to you, someone with technique and mechanics is permitted to carry on with the various School Board and Park Board groups throughout the Province.

You understand that I am writing you in a private way as an official of the Park Board who, before their funds were curtailed were tackling this situation in an effective manner,-- and trying to answer in a friendly frank way the questions you put to me.

Respectfully submitted.

Yours very truly,

(Ian Eisenhardt)

Source: Eisenhardt Personal Reports to Weir, December 5th, 1934, Eisenhardt Collection.

APPENDIX D

PRO-REC CENTRES AND REGISTRATIONS: 1934-35 TO 1952-53

Year	Centres		Registrations					
	Win. Summ. Total		Winter			Summer		
			Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
1934-35	19	--	1,903	865	2,768	---	---	---
1935-36	22	14	2,211	2,324	4,535	518	467	985
1936-37	57	20	4,091	5,068	9,159	599	723	1,322
1937-38	92	22	6,983	13,021	20,004	851	638	1,489
1938-39	135	39	7,784	16,002	23,786	2,043	1,002	3,045
1939-40								
1940-41	94	23	3,861	8,633	12,494	2,968	4,080	7,048
1941-42	131	45	2,785	6,389	9,174	1,472	2,646	4,118
1942-43		(est)	3,326	4,511	7,837	1,130	988	2,118
1943-44	196	52	3,506	5,354	8,860	1,421	1,156	2,577
1944-45	198	51	6,708	9,086	15,794	1,716	1,632	3,348
1945-46	200	77	6,483	9,918	16,401	4,423	4,189	8,612
1946-47	150	52			9,404			7,927
1947-48								
1948-49								
1949-50					13,388			3,895
1950-51					12,721			986
1951-52								
1952-53								
			1,903	865	2,768	6,829	12,713	19,542
			2,729	2,791	5,520	4,257	9,035	13,292
			4,690	5,791	10,481	4,456	5,499	9,955
			7,834	13,659	21,493	4,927	6,510	11,437
			9,827	17,004	26,831	8,424	10,718	19,142
						10,906	14,107	25,013
								17,331
								14,042
								17,283
								13,707
								16,921
								17,695
								18,591

Sources: *Public Schools Reports*, 1934-35 to 1952-53; *Comprehensive Annual Reports (Pro-Rec)*, 1935-36, 1936-37, 1938-39; *Physical Fitness Division Annual Reports*, 1944-45 to 1949-50.

APPENDIX E

PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL GRANTS TO PRO-REC: 1934-35 TO 1952-53

Year	Provincial Basic Grant	Federal Grant	Provincial Matching	Salaries (incl.)	Salaries %	Total Grants
1934-35	\$12,480.51			\$ 6,019.42	48.2	\$12,480.51
1935-36	15,999.99			9,206.90	57.5	15,999.99
1936-37	30,032.62			20,222.48	67.3	30,032.62
1937-38	40,524.08			37,381.35	61.8	60,524.08
1938-39	42,645.67		\$11,997.70	48,692.50	64.4	75,645.55
1939-40	41,319.35	\$ 8,002.30	19,000.00	55,009.93	69.4	79,319.35
1940-41	44,441.94	16,499.94	14,249.72	49,513.87	67.9	72,941.37
1941-42	29,986.61	10,000.00	10,000.00	35,091.87	70.2	49,986.61
1942-43	19,735.65	9,986.75	9,986.75	29,216.68	73.6	39,709.16
1943-44	20,695.70	10,000.00	10,000.00	29,848.65	73.3	40,695.70
1944-45	28,402.74	16,015.75		32,117.50	72.3	44,418.49
1945-46	40,576.71	16,015.75		41,308.12	73.0	56,592.46
1946-47	52,140.29	16,015.75		49,328.66	72.4	68,156.04
1947-48	72,703.78	16,015.75		57,904.12	65.3	88,719.53
1948-49	81,209.51	15,993.00		69,178.97	71.2	97,202.51
1949-50	103,501.93	15,993.00		77,024.15	64.5	119,494.93
1950-51	103,195.88	15,993.00		81,312.80	68.3	119,118.88
1951-52	113,582.04	15,993.00		87,671.41	67.7	129,575.04
1952-53	123,874.67	19,296.25		100,765.80	70.4	143,170.92
1953-54 (CPB)	64,634.49	19,296.25		45,065.42	53.7	83,930.74

Sources: British Columbia, *Public Accounts*, 1934-35 to 1953-54.

APPENDIX F

1936-37 PRO-REC CENTRES: LOCATIONS AND DAYS

Region	Location	Women	Men
Vancouver	Capitol Hill	W	F
	Crosby Church	F	T
	Crystal Pool	W,F	M
	Marpole School	M	W
	Beatty St. Drill Hall		T,Th
	Fleming School		M,W
	Kerrisdale School	M,Th	T,F
	Normal School	M,Th	T,F
	Norquay School		T,F
	Open Air School		M,W
	Queen Mary School		M
	Renfrew School	M,W	
	St. Andrew's Wesley Church	F	W
	Templeton School	W,F	T,Th
	Van Horne School	T,Th	M,W
Lower Mainland	Hollyburn Ridge	Sa,Su	Sa,Su
	Grouse Mountain	Sa,Su	Sa,Su
	Port Coquitlam	T	T
	Lynmour	F	F
	North Vancouver	M,W	M,W
	West Vancouver	M,W	M,W
	New Westminster	M,W,Th	M,W
Victoria and District	Memorial Hall	W,F	
	Y.M.C.A.	T	
	High School	M	Th
	Crystal Garden Gymnasium		W
	Crystal Garden Pool	T,Th	T
	Esquimalt	Th	T
	Lake Hill	Th	T
	North Saanich	M	M
	Marigold	T	W
Mid-Island	Nanaimo	M,W	M,W
	Ladysmith	F	F
	Chemainus	T,Th	T,Th
Upper Fraser Valley	Chilliwack	M,Sa	M,Sa
	East Chilliwack	T,Sa	T,Sa
	Rosedale	M,Th	M,Th
	Agassiz	T	T
	Harrison Hot Springs	F	F
	Atchelitz	T	T

Region	Location	Women	Men
Lower Fraser Valley	Abbotsford	M,Th	M,Th
	Matsqui	T	T
	Sumas	W	W
	Bradner	F	F
	Mission City	W,Th	W,Th
Southern Interior	Kelowna	W,F	W,F
	Toc-H (Kelowna)		T
	East Kelowna	Th	Th
	Rutland	M	M
	Penticton	W	M
	Ashcroft	T,F	T,F
Northern British Columbia	Prince George	W,F	M,W,Sa
	South Fort George	T	T
	Prince Rupert	All week	All week
	Vanderhoof	M,Sa	M,Sa

APPENDIX G

1939 OFFICIAL TEXTBOOK: PRO-REC SUMMER SCHOOL

Contents

<u>Pages</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1 - 3	Staff
4 - 5	Introduction
6 - 16	History of Physical Education
17 - 43	Anatomy, Physiology, and Health
44 - 62	Fundamentals of Gymnastics
63 - 72	Women's Fundamental Gymnastics
73 - 79	Women's Fundamental Gymnastics - Tables
80 - 95	Women's Fundamental Gymnastics - Music
96 - 98	Slow Gymnastics
99 - 101	Corrective Keep Fit Exercise Table
102 - 113	Keep Fit Work
114 - 116	Stall Bar Exercises
117 - 122	Ballet Technique
123 - 125	Ballet Exercises to Music
126 - 159	Dances - directions to music
160 - 165	Pyramids
166 - 173	Tumbling
174 - 176	Tumbling Routine
177 - 182	Mat Acrobatics for Women
183 - 185	Springboard Tumbling
186 - 193	Vaulting
194 - 199	Track and Field
200 - 205	Life-Saving
206 - 211	Fancy Diving
212 - 213	Space Requirements for Organized Games and Sports for Adults
214	Handball
215	Net Quoits
216	Volleyball
216 - 217	Basketball
218	Box Soccer
218 - 219	Table Tennis
220	Tennis
221	Horseshoe Pitching
222 - 224	Rugby
225 - 226	Cricket
227 - 228	Field Hockey
229 - 230	Badminton
231 - 253	Group Games and Contests
254 - 261	Basketball Coaching
262 - 267	Teaching Ballroom Dancing

Source: British Columbia, Department of Education, Recreational and Physical Education Branch, *Official Textbook: 1939 Pro-Rec Summer School*.

APPENDIX H

CERTIFICATE FOR PRO-REC SUMMER SCHOOL COURSE

Recreational and Physical Education Branch

Hon H. G. T. Perry

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Hon. G. M. Weir

Minister of Education



Dr. S. J. Willis

Deputy Minister

GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Summer School Course in
Recreational and Physical Education

This is to Certify that _____
of _____ has attended _____ Summer Course(s) of
six weeks duration and has attained the following Standards in the activities listed below.

ACTIVITY	as LEADER		as INSTRUCTOR	
	Demonstrating Ability	Teaching Ability	Demonstrating Ability	Teaching Ability
	CLASS	CLASS	CLASS	CLASS
Fundamental Gymnastics
Dancing (a) Ballroom
(b) Elementary Ballet
(c) Folk
(d) Tap
(e)
Mat Tumbling
Mat Acrobatics
Springboard Tumbling
Box Vaulting
Parallel Bars
High Bar
Flying Rings
Target Shooting Archery
Weight Lifting
Pyramid Building
Gymnastic Exercises Rhythmic
Gymnastic Exercises Calisthenics
"Keep Fit" Exercises
Group Games and Contests
Swimming
Life-saving
Track and Field
Wrestling
Swimming Club Swimming
Elementary Aerobics Philosophy of P.E.
Physiology of Muscular Exs.
First Aid
Personal Hygiene Personal Hygiene
Fencing
Tennis

Honours = Excellent
Class I = Very Good
Class II = Good
Class III = Fair

Date _____

Chief Instructor

Director of Physical Education
Province of British Columbia

APPENDIX I

PROGRAMME, FIRST MASS DISPLAY, PRINCE RUPERT, 1936

Physical Education keeps you Fit and Healthy.
Life Insurance makes you Independent and Wealthy.

Consult S. J. JABOUR, C.L.U.

NORTHERN B.C. REPRESENTATIVE SUN LIFE OF CANADA

PROGRAMME

10. Vaulting Box Exercises

11. Mat Tumbling

12. Rope Skipping Drill

13. Vaulting Box Exercises

14. Folk Dance

15. Parallel Bars Exercises

16. Danish Primary Gymnastics

17. Pyramids (without and with apparatus)

18. Gymnastic Salute

Girls

Boys and Men

Girls

Boys and Men

Girls

Men

Girls and Ladies

Chosen Group

All Participants
- GOD SAVE THE KING.

At the Piano : Miss Berner and Miss Grassie.

Instructor : Mr. Gillies and Miss Currie.

The Instructors, on behalf of the Department, wish to express their appreciation of the co-operation extended by Commissioner Alder, Government Agent Norman Watt, Lieut. Com. Walter Hume, Mr. Norman Kinsman, Dr. H. N. Brocklesby, the Elber Lodge and the Junior Chamber of Commerce for their assistance towards this display.

SPECIAL IN RENFREW IRONS

Regular \$2.75 -- While they last, ONLY **\$1.59**

25c Down and 25c a Month and 35c extra.

NORTHERN B.C. POWER CO. LTD

KA IEN HARDWARE

If it's for SPORTS we have it.

CHEVROLET

For Economical Transportation

Phone 52 KA IEN MOTORS LTD. Night Call: Black 706

CHEVROLET AND GENERAL MOTORS DEALERS

PROGRAMME

1. "O Canada"

2. Remarks by Mr. Eisenhardt

3. Co-ordination Exercises

1. Passive Exercises

5. Bench Exercises

6. Folk Dance

7. Illuminated Indian Club Drill

8. Mat Tumbling

9. Group Games (Comic Boxing and Wrestling)

All Participants

Provincial Director

Girls and Ladies

Boys and Men

Ladies and Men

Girls

Boys and Men

Girls

Boys
- Incidental Music by the Boys' Band, under the direction of Mr. Greenfield.

Instructor : Mr. Kozoolin.

The Instructors, on behalf of the Department, wish to express their appreciation of the co-operation of the co-operation extended by Commissioner Alder, Government Agent Norman Watt, Lieut. Com. Walter Hume, Mr. Norman Kinsman, Dr. H. N. Brocklesby, the Elber Lodge and the Junior Chamber of Commerce for their assistance towards this display.

◆ ORMES LIMITED ◆

The Pioneer Druggists ◆ The Rexall Store

EAT PLENTY OF CHRIS'S MILL BREAD

Bread— The Energy Food, The Muscle Builder.

● CHRIS'S MILL BAKERY ●

APPENDIX J

PROGRAMME, MASS DISPLAY, VANCOUVER, 1942

EIGHTH ANNUAL DISPLAY

Display



Program

6. "Over The Top"—(1) Cadet Drill, commanded by Hale Atkinson.
(2) A.R.P. Methods, directed by Gordon Longmuir, No. 11 District Warden.
(3) A.R.P. Wardens' Pro-Rec "P. T.", conducted by Hale Atkinson.
(4) Vaulting—Commando style. Supervised by Ed Ketter, Delbert McLeod, Art Warburton and William Wilcox.
Directed by Ernie Grant.
N.B.—Following this number, there will be a short demonstration by Members of the popular Pro-Rec classes at the Blind Institute, with Instructors Connie Melbliss in charge.
As these members are SIGHTLESS, all-ence is requested so as not to distract their attention.
7. Fundamental Gymnastics—These rhythmic exercises form the basis of the Pro-Rec women's gymnastic training.
Introductory Marching Tactics—commanded by Eileen Armstrong.
Demonstrations—Ethel Abel, Bernice Birnie, Margaret Douglas, Betty Reid, Gwen Rennie, and Mary Wallace.
Directed by Hilda Keadley.
8. Fitness First! (1) Trampoline—see advertisement for the training of women and parachutists in charge: Ed Ketter.
(2) Parallel Bars—an old Army "P. T." favorite. In charge: Don Beal.
(3) Advanced Springboard Tumbling—for daring, speed, and muscular coordination.
In charge: Art Warburton.
(4) Safety Net Tumbling—Firemen's stunts are somewhat similar.
In charge: Delbert McLeod.
(5) Wrestling and Boxing—the time-honored arts of manly self-defence.
In charge: Paul Nemeth and Tommy Gann.
(6) Barbells—the systematic conditioner and basis for correct industrial lifting. In charge: George McGregor.
9. Games for All! (1) Volleyball, "Beamball" and "Goodminton"—supervised by Hale Atkinson, Gus Phillips and Delbert McLeod, respectively.
(2) Basketball, Table Tennis, and Games—supervised by Jack Dickerson and Gus Phillips; Ed Ketter, Hale Atkinson and Don Beal, respectively.
10. Tumbling Menace: (1) Falling in line—apical fashion.
(2) Teasing Equilibrium—through Advanced tumbling.
Directed by Ed Ketter.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT
In Charge of Display: Jerry Mathison and Hilda Keadley, Provincial Chief Instructors.
Announcer: Paul King, Executive Secretary.
Planner: Ethel Shone, ATCM, assisted by Florence Berry, ATCM.
Orchestra directed by Will Edmunds.
Equipment management: Ernie Grant, Vancouver Chief Instructor.
Costumes designed and cut by Vera Drake, Pro-Rec Instructor. Material provided by Pro-Rec Members and sewn by themselves.
Public Address System installed by Net Blagor and Radio Service Engineers.
Radio Broadcast over CJOR by Doris Babd and Rosa Mortimer.
Official Movies filmed by Ernie Edwards.
Special Lighting Effects by Paul Harmon.
First-Aid Attendants supplied by St. John's Ambulance Brigade.
Program Editor: Paul King.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
To Mr. Bob Brown, B.C. Electric Publicity Department, Eastern Photographic Materials, Radio Station CJOR, Vancouver Daily Province, Vancouver Sun, Vancouver News-Herald, Greater Vancouver Suburban Newspapers, our who have helped the Pro-Rec-Fitness Plan in general, and the Mass Display in particular—our most sincere thanks.
The PRO-REC EXECUTIVE BOARD.

EIGHTH ANNUAL DISPLAY

British Columbia's Provincial Recreation Centres

Present



In the Vancouver Athletic Club Gymnasium on the Nights of April 14th, 15th and 16th

Net proceeds will be divided between the Vancouver ARP Drive and the Milk for Britain Fund.

PROGRAM

1. Parade of all Participants—headed by the Pro-Rec Staff and including Pro-Rec men's and women's gymnastic groups, and representatives of Pro-Rec archery, badminton, basketball, boxing, cricket, hockey, skating, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, track and field athletics, weightlifting, wrestling, and youth boxing, as well as members of the Pro-Rec A.R.P., Home Nursing, War-time Nutrition, and First-Aid Courses.
- The audience is requested to join the Pro-Rec in their Marching Song to the tune of "Anchors Aweigh", as led by Pro-Rec member Cyril Trotti:
Healthy Pro-Rec are we,
Strong, brave, and free;
Smilingly we step along,
And unite and sing our marching song:
Fight for Democracy,
Keep fit to serve—
Whatever fate may bring,
We'll face with courage, high morale, and verve!
2. The National Anthem. Everyone is asked to sing the following version of "O Canada."
O Canada! Our Home and Native Land,
True patriot love in all thy sons command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The true north, strong and free,
And stand on guard, O Canada,
We stand on guard for thee!
3. Opening Ceremonies.
Greetings from His Worship Mayor J. Cornett, and Lient. Ian Eisenhardt, former Pro-Rec Director.
4. Military "P. T."—To pave the way for military enlistment, all Pro-Rec men's classes have taught the Military Physical Training Tables 1 and 6 during the winter season 1941-42. Directed by Jerry Mathison.
5. Folk Dancing—(1) Group of six Couple Dances.
(2) American Square Dances:
(a) "Darling Nellie Gray"
(b) "Oh, Dem Golden Slippers"
(c) "Yankee Doodle".
Caller: Beryl Dougherty.
- (8) Gypsy Dance, featuring Betty Reid.
Directed by Hilda Keadley.

APPENDIX K

BRITISH COLUMBIA NATIONAL PHYSICAL FITNESS ENABLING ACT, 1944

1944

NATIONAL PHYSICAL FITNESS
AGREEMENT.

CHAP. 37



CHAPTER 37.

An Act to enable the Government to enter into Agreements with the Dominion pursuant to "The National Physical Fitness Act," being Chapter Twenty-nine of the Statutes of Canada, 1943.

[Assented to 15th March, 1944.]

WHEREAS "The National Physical Fitness Act, 1943," of the Dominion provides that the Minister of Pensions and National Health may, with the approval of the Governor in Council, enter into an agreement with any Province to provide financial assistance for the purposes mentioned in the said Act: Preamble.

And whereas it is expedient that the Government be authorized to enter into any agreement pursuant to the said Act of the Dominion:

Therefore, His Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of British Columbia, enacts as follows:—

1. This Act may be cited as the "National Physical Fitness Enabling Act." Short title.

2. The Government is authorized to enter into an agreement or agreements with the Minister of Pensions and National Health of the Dominion (or other Minister duly authorized by the Dominion) for any of the purposes mentioned in "The National Physical Fitness Act, 1943," of the Dominion; and the Minister of Education of the Province is authorized to execute and deliver on behalf of the Province any agreement so entered into. Power to enter into agreement.

VICTORIA, B.C.:

Printed by CHARLES F. BANFIELD, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty.
1944.

APPENDIX L

BRITISH COLUMBIA ORDER-IN-COUNCIL TO DISCONTINUE
PRO-REC, AUGUST 11th, 1953

1890.

Approved and ordered this 11th day of August, A.D. 19 53.

At the Executive Council Chamber, Victoria,


Lieutenant-Governor.

PRESENT:

The Honourable

in the Chair.

Mr. Martin
Mrs. Rolston
Mr. Black
Mr. Bonner
Mr. Gunderson
Mr. Chetwynd
Mr. Wicks
Mr.
Mr.
Mr.
Mr.

To His Honour

The Lieutenant-Governor in Council:

The undersigned has the honour to report:

Rec. 969/60

THAT the Physical Education and Recreation Branch of the Department of Education has been reorganized as the Community Programmes Branch:

AND WHEREAS THE policy of the Government will be in future to discontinue the actual operation of recreation classes by the Provincial Government:


AND WHEREAS the said Government will in future assist local communities in the operation of their own recreation programmes by the payment of certain grants-in-aid of such programmes:

AND THAT the provision of funds for such grants has been made by Vote 89 (b) of Estimates of the Department of Education as presented to the Legislature for the year ending March 31, 1954:

AND TO RECOMMEND THAT authority be granted to establish a scale of grants and provisions thereto in accordance with the attached schedule

DATED this

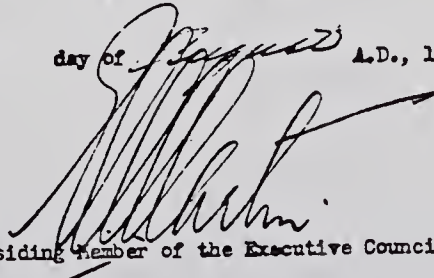
11th day of August A.D., 1953



Minister of Education

APPROVED this

11th day of August A.D., 1953


Presiding Member of the Executive Council

APPENDIX M

CENTRES, REGISTRATIONS, AND FUNDS: 1934 TO 1952-53

Year	Centres	Registrations	Funds
1934-35	19	2,768	\$ 12,480.51
1935-36	36	5,520	15,999.99
1936-37	77	10,481	30,032.62
1937-38	114	21,493	60,524.08
1938-39	174	26,831	75,645.55
1939-40	156	21,183	79,319.35
1940-41	117	19,542	72,941.37
1941-42	176	13,292	49,986.61
1942-43	141 (est)	9,955	39,709.16
1943-44	248	11,437	40,695.70
1944-45	249	19,142	44,418.49
1945-46	277	25,013	56,592.46
1946-47	202	17,331	68,156.04
1947-48	202	14,042	88,719.53
1948-49	197	17,283	97,202.51
1949-50	185	13,707	119,494.93
1950-51	240	16,921	119,118.88
1951-52	244	17,695	129,575.04
1952-53	213	18,581	143,170.92

Sources: *Public Schools Reports*, 1934-35 to 1952-53; *Comprehensive Annual Reports (Pro-Rec)*, 1935-36, 1936-37, 1938-39; *Public Accounts*, 1934-35 to 1953-54.

APPENDIX N

INDIVIDUALS ASSOCIATED WITH PRO-REC¹

- Batcheler, Alf. Vancouver Island Instructor (1), Youth Hostels Organizer (2), Public Relations Officer (3), Vancouver Island Chief Instructor (3).
- Borde, Frances. Victoria Instructress (1,2,3).
- Brown, Lorne. Provincial Supervisor of Physical Education, 1947-49.
- Bruin, Dorothy. Instructress responsible for women's Keep Fit programme (1,2).
- Campbell, H.L. Member of Pro-Rec Investigating Committee, 1951; Deputy Minister of Education, 1953-58.
- Dickerson, Jock. Sports Organizer (3).
- Eisenhardt, Ian. Director of Pro-Rec, 1934-44 (on official leave, 1941-44); National Director of Physical Fitness, 1944-46.
- Fairey, F.T. Deputy Minister of Education, 1945(6?)-53.
- Grant, Ernie. Vancouver Instructor (1), Vancouver Chief Instructor (2).
- Greenwood, Sid. Chief Instructor for Vancouver and Lower Mainland (3).
- Hansen, Sid. Senior Equipment Officer (3).
- Horsfield, Joan. Chief Instructress for Victoria (1).
- John, H.L. Member of Pro-Rec Investigating Committee, 1951; Director of Adult Education (3).
- Keatley, Hilda. Vancouver Instructress, 1936-37; Chief Instructress for Vancouver, 1937-45; Provincial Supervisor for Women, 1945-53; Executive Board, 1941-44.
- Kelter, Ed. Instructor, Vancouver Island (1); Chief Instructor, Kootenays (2), Vancouver Island (3).
- King, Paul (formerly Kozoolin). Instructor, Staff Secretary, Public Relations Officer (1); Executive Board, 1941-42.
- Lee, Ernest. Chief Instructor for New Westminster (1); Director of Pro-Rec, 1946-49; National Director of Physical Fitness, 1949-50.

¹Where only approximate dates are known because of incomplete information, the three main time periods for Pro-Rec (Depression, World War II, Post-War Period) are indicated as (1), (2), and (3) respectively.

- Lewis, Joseph. Director, Pro-Rec classes for the blind (3).
- Lynes, Jack. Chief Instructor, Kelowna (1); Pro-Rec Instructor, Provincial Mental Hospital (3).
- Martin, Eric. Pro-Rec Registrar (1,2).
- Mathisen, Jerry. Provincial Supervisor for Men, 1934-53.
- Meilicke, Dorothiruth. Chief Instructress for Vancouver, 1934-37.
- Panton, James. Regional Supervisor for Okanagan Valley (3).
- Pattulo, T.D. "Duff". Premier of British Columbia, 1933-41.
- Perry, H.G.T. Minister of Education, 1941-45.
- Phillips, R.J. "Bus". Instructor (1), Registrar (2), Office Manager (3); Acting Director of Pro-Rec, 1949-53.
- Quinn, Robert. Sports Officer (3).
- Rolston, Tilly. Minister of Education, 1952-53.
- Ruben, Thomas. Chief Instructor, Fraser Valley (1,2,3); Alberta consultant, 1938, 1939; Saskatchewan summer school staff (3).
- Sanderson, Phyllis. Vancouver Instructress (1); Alberta staff, 1939-42.
- Sharp, R.F. Member of Pro-Rec Investigating Committee, 1951; Superintendent of Vancouver Schools (3).
- Straith, W.T. Minister of Education, 1947-52.
- Walton, Grace. Chief Instructress for Vancouver (3).
- Weir, George M. Minister of Education, 1933-41, 1945-47.
- Willis, S.J. Deputy Minister of Education, 1931-32 to 1945(6?).

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